

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Crown Copyright documents reproduced by courtesy of The National Archives, London, England.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

The National Archives give no warranty as to the accuracy, completeness or fitness for the purpose of the information provided.

Images may be used only for purposes of research, private study or education. Applications for any other use should be made to The National Archives Image Library, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU.

EASTERN

F.O.
371

1947

PALESTINE

File No. 46

pp. 11793 - 11946

CLOSED
UNTIL

1978

61797

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

<p>1547</p>	<p>Palestine</p> <p>EASTERN</p>	<p>E11Y93 /G</p> <p>DEC 1947</p>		
<p>E11Y93146 18 31/6</p> <p>F.O. Min</p> <p>Dated 11 Dec</p> <p>Received 12 Dec.</p>	<p>Palestine Decision: Conversation of Sir O. Baggett with Nuri Fakhri.</p>			
<p>Last Paper</p>	<p>(Minutes)</p>			
<p>References</p>	<p>In within.</p> <p>15/12</p>			
<p>(Print)</p> <p>61797</p>				
<p>(How disposed of)</p> <p>Tel) Bagdad 1161 11 Dec</p> <p>Rptd New York 4249</p> <p>W'lon 12863</p> <p>Amman 561</p> <p>Cairo 2249</p> <p>Damascus 628</p> <p>Adedd 520</p> <p>Beirut 1113</p> <p>BHFO Cairo 880</p> <p>o) c.o. 4. Dec 13 Dec</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p>(Action completed)</p> <p>25 17/12</p> </td> <td> <p>(Index)</p> <p>1/12</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>(Action completed)</p> <p>25 17/12</p>	<p>(Index)</p> <p>1/12</p>		
<p>(Action completed)</p> <p>25 17/12</p>	<p>(Index)</p> <p>1/12</p>			
<p>Next Paper</p>				

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

1
2
3
4
5
6

3

to) Cairo 550

11 Dec

Rp'd W'ton 12864

Bagdad 1163

Beirut 444

Amman 562

Damascus 629

Jeddah 521

B.M.E.C. 882

8) H.P.E.

13 Dec

Given Diplomatic
Secret Distⁿ

✓ 15 Dec.

tel) Cairo 2270

✓ 15 Dec.

tel) Bagdad 1177

Damascus 634

Beirut 444

Jeddah 524

Amman 568

B.M.E.C. 894

W'ton 12998

U.K. Del. N.Y. 430

1
2
3
4
5
6

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
Reference: **FO 371/61797**

Copy No. 8

CONVERSATION WITH NURI PASHA, PRESIDENT OF THE IRAQI SENATE

5. Sir O. Sargent underlined the danger that the Mufti might destroy any chance of conciliation by ill-considered use of force and hoped that responsible Arab leaders would be able to restrain him. Nuri said he felt sure they would do so.

6. Nuri went on to express the hope that the British Administration in Palestine would be withdrawn at the earliest possible date and expressed regret that this could not be in January. The longer the Administration remained, the greater were the chances of the British forces becoming involved in clashes. It would only be when the two sides were left together that out of the balance of forces some solution could be worked out. The Arabs would, he said, match Jewish immigration by Arab immigration.

7. I said to Nuri that the British Administration would be withdrawn at the earliest feasible moment. So long as we retained the mandate our hands were tied by embarrassing commitments. We wished to disentangle ourselves from these and thereby to free ourselves to pursue a consistent policy towards the Middle East as a whole.

8. I told Nuri in confidence that informal discussions for a revised treaty with Iraq had been taking place in Bagdad, of which Saleh Jabr would no doubt inform him more fully. Nuri welcomed the proposal for the conclusion of a revised treaty at the earliest possible moment, but, although knowing generally that the question was under discussion, was clearly unaware of recent developments in detail. I took the line that the events we had been discussing surely made it all the more desirable that relations between our two countries should be placed upon a closer and firmer footing than ever. I was sending to Saleh Jabr a cordial invitation to visit London at once in the hope that it might be possible for us to agree upon and conclude a revised treaty. Good progress has been made in the talks on every point except one, namely, facilities for our aircraft to use Iraqi bases side by side with the Iraqi air force in peace-time. I felt

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

9. Nuri Pasha said that he was leaving for Cairo by air on 12th December and hoped to see Saleh Jabr there. He would like at the same time to say anything to Nokrashi about negotiations with Egypt which might be helpful to us. When he last saw Nokrashi he had impressed upon him the desirability of early and successful negotiations and had suggested two lines of approach : firstly, the possibility of some special régime for the Suez Canal area (perhaps under the United Nations), and, secondly, the need for common defence arrangements between all the Middle East countries and His Majesty's Government. He himself was thinking of a defence agreement between the Arab countries which would be supplemented and buttressed by bilateral agreements between the countries concerned and His Majesty's Government.

10. It was explained to Nuri that the first suggested approach was out of the question since it would bring the Soviet Union into the area and might encourage the Soviet Union to press for a similar régime for the Straits. But the second suggestion was, as he knew, in full accord with our ideas. I hoped that he would do

his best to implant the idea more firmly and definitely in the minds of the Egyptians.

11. I went on to say that our requirements in Egypt were, indeed, entirely conceived in terms of common defence arrangements, and might be summed up as consisting of the requisite facilities for this purpose. We needed comparatively little in peace-time and certainly not large numbers of troops. But we must have the facilities to enable us to take the necessary steps in the event of international emergency. I should like to conclude the negotiations with Iraq first and would then hope to be ready for talks about Egypt early in the New Year.

12. Nuri added that when he had spoken before to Nokrashy he had laid great stress on the point that the Sudan must be left on one side to be handled separately, and said that Nokrashy had been inclined to agree. (I have had no indication of this before and it may not represent the facts, but he definitely said it.) I told him that was the only possible way to handle the matter and hoped that he would rub it in with the Egyptians.

E. B.

Foreign Office,
11th December, 1947

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: FO 371/61797

Registry
No.

Top Secret.
Secret.
Confidential
Restricted.
Open.

CYPHER

F. O.
E11493

13 DEC 1947

Despatched

M.

Draft.

BAGDAD

~~TOP SECRET~~ IMMEDIATE

TOP SECRET

Add Bagdad No 1161 re ref for info to Washington, via Del. N. York, Cairo, Damascus, Beirut, Jeddah, Amman, Jerusalem, BME.

Telegram.

No.

1161

(Date)

Dec 11

Repeat to :—

NEW YORK

WASHINGTON

AMMAN

CAIRO

DAMASCUS

JEDDAH

JERUSALEM

BEIRUT

En Clair.

Code.

Cypher.

Distribution :—

DIP SECRET

Copies to :—

C. O.

Min of Defense

I saw Nuri Pasha this afternoon. He had lunched with Sir O. Sargent beforehand.

2. Nuri expressed deep disappointment at what he described ^{as} the pressure brought to bear by the United States Government at the last moment on other countries to vote for the partition of Palestine. He said that Mr. Marshall had assured representatives of the Arab countries when the Assembly opened that the United States Government would refrain from exercising such pressure. There had been little or no signs of their doing so until after November 19th. The critical day had been November 26th. Had the matter come to a vote then there would not, repeat not, have been the necessary two-thirds majority for partition. But in ^{the} interval before the next meeting the United States Government had intervened behind the scenes. He cited China, Haiti, the Philippines and others as instances. He believed there had been direct action by the White House. It would take a long time for the United States to live down the intense resentment they had now aroused in the Arab countries.

3. Nuri/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

(1353) Wt. 1.9697-140 100m 3147 G.S.St. Gp 620

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

7

3. Nuri added that one redeeming feature was that the Soviet Government had shown ~~from that~~ ^{their} previous protestations ~~of~~ ^{of} friendship for the Arab countries to be false. He himself had been afraid that the Soviet Government would abstain or even vote against partition and thus manoeuvre themselves into a more favourable position in the Middle East. He was thankful that this had not occurred.

4. Nuri went on to say that the Arab countries were now looking to H.M.G. / He himself believed that there ought ~~to be~~ at the appropriate moment to be a further attempt at ^{He mentioned the earlier suggestion of conciliation} conciliation by the United States and King Ibn Saud and said that the Arab countries would still be prepared to abide by this. He hoped that H.M.G. would use their influence with the United States Government in favour of this or some other form of conciliation.

5. Sir O. Sargent underlined the danger that the Mufti might destroy any chance of conciliation by ill considered use of force and hoped that responsible Arab leaders would be able to restrain him. Nuri said he felt sure they would do so.

6. Nuri went on to express the hope that the British Administration in Palestine would be withdrawn at the earliest possible date and expressed regret that this could not be in January. The longer the Administration remained the greater were the chances of the British forces becoming involved in clashes. It ~~was~~ ^{would be} only when the two sides were left together that out of the balance of forces some

solution/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

8

NOTHING

12/47) (14728) Wt. 11489—144 250m 5/47 G.S.St.

S. Nuri leaves for Cairo
early Dec. 12.
[Paris only] Please pass to BMED as my
ail no 880
BARR

11.12

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

9

[This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on]

Top Secret.

Cypher/OTP.

DIPLOMATIC (SECRET)

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO BAGDAD

No. 1161.

11th December, 1947. D. 2.00 a.m. 12th December, 1947.

Repeated to New York (U.K. Delegation) No. 4279

Washington No. 12863

Amman No. 561.

Cairo No. 2249.

Damascus No. 628.

Jedda No. 520.

Jerusalem.

Beirut No. 773.

B.M.E.O. Cairo No. 880.

IMMEDIATE.

TOP SECRET.

Addressed to Bagdad No. 1161 of 11th December, repeated for information to Washington, United Kingdom Delegation New York, Cairo, Damascus, Beirut, Jedda, Amman, Jerusalem, British Middle East Office Cairo.

I saw Nuri Pasha this afternoon. He had lunched with Sir O. Sargent beforehand.

2. Nuri expressed deep disappointment at what he described as the pressure brought to bear by the United States Government at the last moment on other countries to vote for the partition of Palestine. He said that Mr. Marshall had assured representatives of the Arab countries when the Assembly opened that the United States Government would refrain from exercising such pressure. There had been little or no signs of their doing so until after November 19th. The critical day had been November 26th. Had the matter come to a vote then there would not (repeat not) have been the necessary two-thirds majority for partition. But in the interval before the next meeting the United States Government had intervened behind the scenes. He cited China, Haiti, the Philippines and others as instances. He believed there had been direct action by the White House. It would take a long time for the United States to live down the intense resentment they had now aroused in the Arab countries.

3. Nuri added that one redeeming feature was that the Soviet Government had shown their previous protestations of friendship for the Arab countries to be false. He himself had been afraid that the Soviet Government would abstain or even vote against partition and thus manoeuvre themselves into a more favourable position in the Middle East. He was thankful that this had not occurred.

/4.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Cairo only]
Please pass to British Middle East Office as my
telegram No.880.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

1	2	3	4	5	6
	1			2	

Registry
No.

Top Secret.
Secret.
Confidential
Restricted.
Open.

CYPHER

Despatched

2 30 M.

Draft.

IMMEDIATE

TOP SECRET

CAIRO

Add Cairo No 2250 "turned" for info to Washington, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Jeddah, Amman, BMEC.

Telegram.

My telegram No. 1161 to Baghdad [10 Dec 11/4]

No. 2250

conversation with Nuri Pasha J.

(Date) Dec 11

2. Nuri Pasha said that he was leaving

Repeat to:—

for Cairo by air on December the 12th and hoped to see Saleh Jabr there. He would like at the same time to say anything to Nokrashy about

WASHINGTON 12864

BAGDAD 1163

BEIRUT 774

AMMAN 562

DAMASCUS 629

JEDDAH 521

BMEC 882

~~BEIRUT~~

not tonight

11.12

~~En Clair.~~

~~Coder~~

Cypher.

Distribution:—

negotiations with Egypt which might be helpful to us. When he last saw Nokrashy he had impressed upon him the desirability of early and successful negotiations and had suggested two lines of approach, firstly the possibility of some special regime for the Suez/area (perhaps under the United Nations) and secondly, the need for common defence arrangements between all the Middle East countries and H.M.G. He himself was thinking of a defence agreement between the Arab countries which would be supplemented and buttressed by bilateral agreements between the countries concerned and H.M.G.

DIP SECRET

3. It was explained to Nuri that the first suggested approach was out of the question since it would bring the Soviet Union into the area and might encourage the Soviet Union to press for But the second suggestion was as he knew in full accord with our ideas. I hoped that he would do his best to implant the idea more firmly and definitely in the minds of the Egyptians.

Copies to:—

a similar regime for the Straits.

My of Defence

4. I went on to say that our requirements in the Middle East were indeed entirely conceived

in/

12

in terms of common defence arrangements, and might be summed up as consisting of the requisite facilities for this purpose. We needed comparatively little in peacetime and certainly not, repeat not, large numbers of troops. But we must have the facilities to enable us to take the necessary steps in the event of international emergency. I should like to conclude the negotiations with Iraq first and would then hope to be ready for talks about Egypt early in the new year.

5. Nuri added that when he had spoken before to Nokrashy he had laid great stress on the point that the Sudan must be left on one side to be handled separately, and said that Nokrashy had been inclined to agree. (I have had no, repeat no, indication of this before and it may not represent the facts, but he definitely said it). I told him this was the only possible way to handle the matter and hoped that he would ~~repeat~~ ^{say} it in with the Egyptians.

[basis only] Please pass to AMEO as my telegram no 882.

Dec 11

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

13

DIPL O M A T I C (S E C R E T)

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO

(Embassy)

D. 2.30 a.m. 12th December 1947.

Repeated to Washington No. 12864

Bagdad No. 1163

Beirut No. 774

Annex No. 562

Damascus No. 629

Jeddah No. 521

B.M.E.O. Cairo No. 882

IMMEDIATE

TOP SECRET

Addressed to Cairo No. 2250 of 11th December repeated

My telegram No. 1161 to Bagdad [of December 11th:

2. Nuri Pasha said that he was leaving for Cairo by air on December the 12th and hoped to see Saleh Jabr there. He would like at the same time to say anything to Nekrashi about negotiations with Egypt which might be helpful to us. When he last saw Nekrashi he had impressed upon him the desirability of early and successful negotiations and had suggested two lines of approach, firstly the possibility of some special régime for the Suez Canal area (perhaps under the United Nations) and secondly, the need for common defence arrangements between all the Middle East countries and His Majesty's Government. He himself was thinking of a defence agreement between the Arab countries which would be supplemented and buttressed by bilateral agreements between the countries concerned and His Majesty's Government.

3. It was explained to Nuri that the first suggested approach was out of the question since it would bring the Soviet Union into the area and might encourage the Soviet Union to press for a similar régime for the Straits. But the second suggestion was as he knew in full accord with our ideas. I hoped that he would do his best to implant the idea more firmly and definitely in the minds of the Egyptians.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

FO 371/61797

5. Nuri added that when he had spoken before to Nekrashi he had laid great stress on the point that the Sudan must be left on one side to be handled separately, and said that Nekrashi had been inclined to agree. (I have had no, (repeat no,) indication of this before and it may not represent the facts, but he definitely said it). I told him that was the only possible way to handle the matter and hoped that he would rub it in with the Egyptians.

Please pass to British Middle East Office Cairo as my telegram No. 882.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference:

FO 371/61797

No. F11793/46/C

~~XXXXX~~
~~Secret.~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Rest of the

OPREK

AMMAN 568

CAIRO 2270

BAGDAD 117-

634 DAMASCUS 634

JEDDA 227 BEU

~~WASHINGTON~~
Telegram

BRITISH MIDDLE

Na EAST OFFI

(Date) Dec. 15

Repeat to :—

12998 Washington

4300 O. K. delegation
New York

with night

13.12

THE KX/85

Index

Cypher.

Distribution :—

Diplomatic

Secret

Copies to :—

Add^d Cairo No 2270 Dec 15th 9 to Bagdad
 Damascus, Beirut, Jedda, Amman, BMEC
 ref^d for infⁿ to Washington & UK Del. N.Y.K.
 15 December 1947.

~~18 December 1947~~

Despatched

40 M

TOP SECRET

Palestine.

2. I do not want to lose sight of the possibility that H.M.G. ^{may} ~~any~~ sooner or later have an opportunity to use their good offices in breaching the wide gulf which still unhappily separates the Jews and the Arabs. When I saw Nuri Pasha on December 11th he said that in his view conciliation at ^{some} ~~such a~~ stage was the best hope and I tried to leave the way open for ^{this} ~~such~~ in my ^{speech} ~~statements~~ in the House of Commons on December 12th. In spite of their present threatening statements it is possible that some at least among the Arabs are uneasy at the thought of defying the rest of the world, and if an opportunity for conciliation arises they might consider H.M.G. to be in the best position to assist. It would be to our advantage if we could still help to promote agreement.

2. You should therefore watch carefully for any signs that might point to a willingness on the Arab side to/development of this nature, whether among political leaders or among others. You should not, repeat not, put forward any ^{specific} suggestion on the above lines without reference to me but you may take any opportunity of implanting or encouraging the idea that conciliation would afford the best way out of the present dangerous and explosive situation.

[CAIRO ONLY] Please pass to BMED
as my tel no 894

BB Ser 4

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

13556) 43697-140 100m 3/47 G.S.St. Gp 620

Top Secret
Cypher/OTP

16
DIPLOMATIC (SECRET)

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO CAIRO

No. 2270

15th December, 1947 D. 4.00 p.m. 15th December, 1947

and to Bagdad No. 1177
Damascus No. 634
Beirut No. 777
Jedda No. 527
Amman No. 568
B.M.E.O. No. 894

Repeated to Washington No. 12998
United Kingdom Delegation New York No. 4300

TOP SECRET

Addressed to Cairo No. 2270 December 15th and to Bagdad,
Damascus, Beirut, Jedda, Amman, B.M.E.O. Repeated for
information to Washington and United Kingdom Delegation
New York.

Palestine.

I do not want to lose sight of the possibility that His Majesty's Government may sooner or later have an opportunity to use their good offices in breaching the wide gulf which still unhappily separates the Jews and the Arabs. When I saw Nuri Pasha on December 11th he said that in his view conciliation at some stage was the best hope and I tried to leave the way open for this in my speech in the House of Commons on December 12th. In spite of their present threatening statements it is possible that some at least among the Arabs are uneasy at the thought of defying the rest of the world, and if an opportunity for conciliation arises they might consider His Majesty's Government to be in the best position to assist. It would be to our advantage if we could still help to promote agreement.

2. You should therefore watch carefully for, and repeat to me at once, any signs that might point to a willingness on the Arab side to consider a development of this nature, whether among political leaders or among others. You should not, repeat not, put forward any specific suggestion on the above lines without reference to me but you may take any opportunity of implanting or encouraging the idea that conciliation would afford the best way out of the present dangerous and explosive situation.

[Cairo only] Please pass to B.M.E.O. as my telegram
No. 894.

888

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

282

E

E 11812

1947

PALESTINE

13 DEC

17

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E 11812/46/31

House of

Commons

Board.

13 Dec.

Palestine Bibliography.Kronach second (revised) edition of a
bibliography first issued July 1946,

Last Paper.

11783

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Minutes.)

Revised Dip. & W. 16/12
M.E. J.D. 11/12

H.B. 12/12

(Action
completed.)

J. L. 25/12

(Index.)

[Signature]

Next Paper.

E 11844

29470 F.O.P.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1. 11312

P A L E S T I N E

13 DEC

enter E 18
E

This is the second (revised) edition of a bibliography first issued in July, 1946. Momentous developments have taken place since then and a number of important additions have been made to the bibliography. Notable among these are Cmd. 7044 "Proposals for the future of Palestine, July, 1946 - February, 1947" (entry No. 27); "The political history of Palestine under British administration, Memorandum by His Majesty's Government presented in 1947 to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine" (entry No. 43), and the report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (entry No. 94).

The general plan of the bibliography remains unaltered and it is in three main sections. The first (section A) contains British Official Publications, which are subdivided into Parliamentary Papers from 1921 to date, Non-parliamentary reports and Hansard references (Lords and Commons). Section B comprises official publications of other countries and of international organisations, including Palestine, U.S.A., the League of Nations and the United Nations. Section C is a selection of other works.

Further detailed information relating to the literature on the Palestine question will be found in:-

1. Subject index of the modern works added to the British Museum Library, 1921-40. 4 vols. London, 1927-44.
2. List of works relating to the mandates system and the territories under mandate catalogued in the Library of the League of Nations. 2 vols. Geneva. 1930-34.
3. United Nations. Question of Palestine. Working documentation prepared by the Secretariat. List of documents in the Reference Library on Palestine. April, 1947 - .
4. United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Report to General Assembly. Vol. II. Annex 9. List of principal documents and written statements submitted to the Special Committee. New York, 1947.

Some of the works in section C also have useful bibliographies, in particular entries nos. 104, 109, 111, 112 and 129.

INDEX

A. British Official Publications

1. Parliamentary Papers	...	...	entries	1 - 27
2. Other Government publications	...	...	"	28 - 43
3. Hansard references (a) Commons	...	...	"	44 - 69
(b) Lords	...	...	"	70 - 81

B. Other Official Publications " 82 - 95

C. Other works " 96 - 133

All the material in Section A is in the Library of the House of Commons, as are those works in sections B and C which are marked with an asterisk.

9th December, 1947

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

A. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS - BRITISH

(1) Parliamentary Papers

1. 1921. (Cmd. 1540) XV, 853. Palestine. Disturbances in May, 1921. Reports of the Commission of inquiry with correspondence relating thereto.

(The Haycraft Commission which concluded that "the fundamental cause of the riots ... was a feeling among the Arabs of discontent with, and hostility to, the Jews, due to political and economic causes, and connected with Jewish immigration, and with their conception of Zionist policy as derived from Jewish exponents.")

2. 1921. (Cmd. 1499) XV, 823. An interim report on the civil administration of Palestine, during the period 1 July, 1920-30 June, 1921.

3. 1922. (Cmd. 1700) XXIII, 243. Palestine. Correspondence with the Palestine Arab delegation and the Zionist organisation.

(A statement of British policy in Palestine of importance as showing the official government interpretation of the Balfour declaration at that time.)

4. 1923. (Cmd. 1785) XXV, 421. League of Nations. Mandate for Palestine, together with a note by the Secretary-General relating to its application to the territory known as Trans-Jordan, under the provisions of article 25.

5. 1923. (Cmd. 1889) XXV, 433. Palestine. Papers relating to the elections for the Palestine Legislative Council, 1923.

6. 1923. (Cmd. 1989) XXV, 465. Palestine. Proposed formation of an Arab agency; correspondence with the High Commissioner for Palestine.

7. 1924-25. (Cmd. 2559) XXX, 921. Convention between the United Kingdom and the United States of America respecting the rights of the governments of the two countries and their respective nationals in Palestine, signed in London, 3rd December, 1924.

8. 1928-29. (Cmd. 3229) XV, 105. The Western or Wailing Wall in Jerusalem: memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(Deals with the incident of 23rd/24th September, 1928, which was a precursor of the more serious disorders of August, 1929).

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON					
1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	
Reference: FO 371/61797					

- (Report of the Peel Commission appointed "to ascertain the underlying causes of the disturbances which broke out in Palestine in the middle of April, 1936: to enquire into the manner in which the Mandate for Palestine is being implemented in relation to our obligations as Mandatory towards the Arabs and the Jews respectively; and to ascertain whether, upon a proper construction of the terms of the Mandate, either the Arabs or the Jews have any legitimate grievances upon account of the way in which the

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON									
1	2	3	4	5	6				
		1			2				
Reference:						FO 371/61797			

21

Mandate has been, or is being implemented". The report recommends the partitioning of the country between Arabs and Jews and the termination of the Mandate. For Minutes of Evidence heard by the Commission see entry No. 39 infra.)

16. 1936-37. (Cmd. 5513) XIV, 665. Palestine. Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, July, 1937.

("His Majesty's Government ... find themselves in general agreement with the arguments and conclusions of the Commission ... they are driven to the conclusion that there is an irreconcilable conflict between the aspirations of Arabs and Jews in Palestine, that these aspirations cannot be satisfied under the terms of the present Mandate, and that a scheme of partition on the general lines recommended by the Commission represents the best and most hopeful solution of the deadlock".)

17. 1937-38. (Cmd. 5634) XXXI, 467. Policy in Palestine. Despatch dated 23rd December, 1937, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the High Commissioner for Palestine.

(Contains documents relating to the setting-up of a technical commission to study partition in detail.)

18. 1937-38. (Cmd. 5854) XIV, 115. Palestine Partition Commission. Report, October, 1938.

(Report of the Woodhead Commission set up to "recommend boundaries for the proposed Arab and Jewish areas". The Commission found "the financial and economic difficulties ... of such a nature that we can find no possible way to overcome them within our terms of reference ... we have proposed a modification of partition".)

19. 1938-39. (Cmd. 5893) XXVII, 593. Palestine. Statement by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, November, 1938.

(The conclusion was reached that in view of the report of the technical commission, the creation of independent Jewish and Arab states inside Palestine was impracticable. The government proposed to hold in London a conference of representatives of the Palestinian Arabs, the neighbouring Arab states and the Jewish Agency.)

20. 1938-39. (Cmd. 5974) XIV, 83. Report of a Committee set up to consider certain correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sherif of Mecca in 1915 and 1916.

(The correspondence was in Arabic and the original drafts or contemporary translations were criticised by the Arab delegations to the London Conference. This Committee produced a version which was agreed to be free from actual error though the Arab members considered it still not the best possible rendering.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

22

21. 1938-39. (Cmd. 5957) XXVII, 573. Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon, His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca July, 1915 - March, 1916.

(The agreed version of the correspondence.)

22. 1938-39. (Cmd. 6019) XXVII, 597. Palestine. Statement of policy, May, 1939.

(The London Conference failed to reach agreement and the government decided to formulate their own policy and to "adhere generally to the proposals which were finally submitted to and discussed with the Arab and Jewish delegations". This White Paper contains those proposals.)

23. 1938-39. (Cmd. 5964) XXVII, 881. Statements made on behalf of His Majesty's Government during the year 1918 in regard to the future status of certain parts of the Ottoman Empire.

(Contains the Hogarth message, the Declaration to the Seven and certain assurances given by Sir Edmund Allenby to the Emir Faisal.)

- 24.. 1939-40. (Cmd. 6180) XII, 193. Palestine land transfers regulations; letter to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, London, February 28th, 1940.

25. 1945-46. (Cmd. 6808). Report of the Anglo-American Committee of inquiry regarding the problems of European Jewry and Palestine, 20th April, 1946.

(Committee concluded that "any attempt to establish either an independent Palestinian state or independent Palestinian states would result in civil strife such as might threaten the peace of the world", and recommended that until hostility between Jews and Arabs disappears, "the Government of Palestine be continued as at present under mandate pending the execution of a Trusteeship Agreement under the United Nations".)

26. 1945-46. (Cmd. 6873). Palestine: statement of information relating to acts of violence, July, 1946.

27. 1946-47. (Cmd. 7044). Proposals for the future of Palestine. July, 1946 - February, 1947.

(Contains: 1. Extract from Lord President's speech in Commons, 31st July, 1946, describing "Provincial Autonomy Plan".
2. Constitutional proposals put forward by Arab States Delegations to Palestine Conference on 30th September, 1946.
3. Proposals submitted by British Delegation to Palestine Conference 7th February, 1947.)

1
2
3
4
5
6

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
Reference: FO 371/61797

(2) Other Government Publications

28. Report on Palestine administration July, 1920 -
December, 1921, 1922. H.M.S.O., 1922-3. 2 vols.
29. Colonial Office. Report on Palestine administration,
1923. (Colonial No. 5). H.M.S.O., 1924.
30. Colonial Office. Palestine. Report by His
Britannic Majesty's Government on the Palestine
administration, 1923. (Colonial No. 9).
H.M.S.O., 1925.

(The first annual report submitted to the Council of the League of Nations.)

31. Colonial Office. Palestine. Report of the High Commissioner on the administration of Palestine 1920-25. (Colonial No. 15). H.M.S.O., 1925.
32. Colonial Office. Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government on the administration under mandate of Palestine and Transjordan for the year 1924 - H.M.S.O., 1925 -

(This Report was issued yearly, the last one published being that for 1938. The title varies.)

33. Department of Overseas Trade. Report on the economic and financial situation of Palestine. H.M.S.O., 1927.
34. Colonial Office. Palestine Commission on the disturbances of August, 1929. (Colonial No. 48).
 - Vol. 1. Evidence heard during the 1st to 29th sittings.
 - Vol. 2. Evidence heard during the 30th to 47th sittings and a selection from the exhibits.
 - Vol. 3. Index. 3 vols. H.M.S.O., 1930.

(Evidence heard by the Shaw Commission - see entry No.9 supra.)

35. Colonial Office. Report of the Commission appointed by His Majesty's Government ... with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations. to determine the rights and claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem. H.M.S.O., 1931.

(This international Commission of three was appointed as a result of the disorders of August, 1929. see entry 11 supra.)

36. Department of Overseas Trade, Economic conditions in Palestine, July, 1931. Report. H.M.S.O., 1931.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

- | | | | | |
|---------|-----|------|----|--------------|
| Hansard | 156 | H.C. | 4 | July, 1922 |
| " | 176 | H.C. | 20 | July, 1924 |
| " | 219 | H.C. | 13 | July, 1928 |
| " | 227 | H.C. | 30 | April, 1929. |

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

25

44. Hansard 245 H.C. Deb. cs. 77-210. 17 November, 1930.
Debate on Palestine on the motion for the adjournment.

(Debate on the policy of the government as set out in Cmd. 3692 - entry No. 13 supra.)

45. Hansard 248 H.C. Deb. cs. 751-757. 13 February, 1931. Text of the letter written by the Prime Minister to Dr. Weizmann giving "the authoritative interpretation" of the White Paper.

(The White Paper in question is Cmd. 3692: see entry No. 13 supra.)

46. Hansard 310 H.C. Deb. cs. 1079-1150. 24 March, 1936.
Debate on Palestine on the Second Reading of the Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill.

47. Hansard 313 H.C. Deb. cs. 1313-1395. 19 June, 1936.
Debate in Committee of Supply on Palestine.

(Debate on disturbances in Palestine in the early months of 1936.)

48. Hansard 326 H.C. Deb. cs. 2235-2367. 21 July, 1937.
Debate on motion "That this House approves the policy of His Majesty's Government relating to Palestine as set out in Command Paper No. 5513".

(For Cmd. 5513 see entry No. 16 supra. It was Resolved "That the proposals contained in Command Paper No. 5513 relating to Palestine should be brought before the League of Nations with a view to enabling His Majesty's Government, after adequate inquiry, to present to Parliament a definite scheme taking into full account all the recommendations of the Command Paper".)

49. Hansard 332 H.C. Deb. cs. 1737-1794. 8 March, 1938.
Debate in Committee of Supply.

(Palestine was the main subject discussed in the debate.)

50. Hansard 341 H.C. Deb. cs. 1987-2107. 24 November, 1938. Debate on Palestine on motion for the adjournment.

51. Hansard 347 H.C. Deb. cs. 1937-2056, 2129-2190. 22 and 23 May, 1939. Debate on motion "That this House approves the policy of His Majesty's Government relating to Palestine as set out in Command Paper No. 6019".

(The motion was carried by 268 votes to 179. For Cmd. 6019 see entry no. 22 supra.)

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

52. Hansard 358 H.C. Deb. cs. 411-526. 6 March, 1940.
Debate on motion:- "That this House regrets that, disregarding the expressed opinion of the Permanent Mandates Commission that the policy contained in the White Paper on Palestine was inconsistent with the terms of the Mandate, and without the authority of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government have authorised the issue of regulations controlling the transfer of land which discriminates unjustly against one section of the inhabitants of Palestine".

(The motion was lost by 292 votes to 129.)
53. Hansard 382 H.C. Deb. cs. 1234-1272. 6 August, 1942.
(Debate on the Jewish Fighting Services on the motion for the adjournment.)
54. Hansard 415 H.C. Deb. cs. 1927-1935. 13 November, 1945. Statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the setting up and terms of reference of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry.
55. Hansard 419 H.C. Deb. cs. 1366-1429. 21 February, 1946. Debate on Palestine on motion for the adjournment.
56. Hansard 422 H.C. Deb. cs. 195-199. 1 May, 1946. Statement by the Prime Minister in regard to Report of Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry.
57. Hansard 424 H.C. Deb. cs. 1795-1801, 1859-1912. 1 July, 1946. Statement by the Prime Minister on the position in Palestine and subsequent debate on motion for the adjournment.
58. Hansard 425 H.C. Deb. 23 July, 1946. cs. 1877-1881. Prime Minister's statement on King David Hotel outrage.
59. Hansard 426. H.C. Deb. 31 July and 1 August, 1946. cs. 957-1075, 1232-1317. Debate on Palestine on motion for the adjournment.
60. Hansard 432. H.C. Deb. 28 January, 1947. cs. 772-776. Statement by Colonial Secretary following abduction of Major Collins and Judge Windham.
61. Hansard 432 H.C. Deb. 31 January, 1947. cs. 1300-1358. Debate on Jewish terrorism in Palestine on motion for adjournment.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:
FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

62. Hansard 432. H.C. Deb. 6 February, 1947. cs. 1976-1980.
Statement by Colonial Secretary on situation in
Palestine.
63. Hansard 433 H.C. Deb. 18 February, 1947. cs. 985-994.
Statement by Foreign Secretary on failure of Con-
ference with the Arabs in London and consultations
with Zionist Organisation. He announced Govern-
ment's intention to submit the problem to the
United Nations.
64. Hansard 433 H.C. Deb. 25 February, 1947. cs. 1901-
2007. Debate on Government policy for Palestine
on motion for the adjournment.
65. Hansard 434 H.C. Deb. 3 March, 1947 cs. 33-37.
Statement by Colonial Secretary on Goldsmith
Officers' Club outrage.
66. Hansard 441 H.C. Deb. 31 July, 1947. cs. 640-642.
Statement by Colonial Secretary on the murder of
two British sergeants.
67. Hansard 441 H.C. Deb. 12 August, 1947. cs. 2314-
2396. Debate on situation in Palestine on motion
for the adjournment.
68. Hansard 441 H.C. Deb. 20 October, 1947. col. 2556..
King's speech on Prorogation stated: "My Govern-
ment have referred the question of the future status
of Palestine to the United Nations ... Meanwhile
they have made it clear that, in the absence of a
settlement, they must plan for an early withdrawal
of British Forces and of the British Administration
from Palestine".
69. Hansard 445 H.C. Deb. 3 December, 1947. cs. 393-396.
Statement by Colonial Secretary on disturbances in
Palestine.

(b) House of Lords

70. Hansard 99 H.L. Deb. cs. 750-795. 26 February, 1936.

(Debate on Lord Snell's Notice that he would ask His
Majesty's Government what is their intention in regard to
the proposed Legislative Council for Palestine; whether
they have fully considered the widespread objections
which have been raised to the inauguration of such a
Council; and whether they will consider the advisability
of deferring the proposal until greater experience of
local government in Palestine has been obtained.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

71. Hansard 106 H.L. Deb. cs. 599-674, 797-824. 20-21 July, 1937.

(Debate on Palestine on Lord Snell rising "to call attention to the Palestine Royal Commission Report and to the statement of the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to the same (Cmd. 5479 and Cmd. 5513)".)

72. Hansard 111 H.L. Deb. cs. 412-467. 8 December, 1938.

(Debate on Palestine on Lord Snell rising "to call attention to the Report of the Palestine Partition Commission and to the statement by His Majesty's Government (Cmd. 5893) which accompanies it.")

73. Hansard 113 H.L. Deb. cs. 81-145. 23 May, 1939.

(Debate on motion of Marquess of Dufferin and Ava "That this House approves the policy of His Majesty's Government relating to Palestine as set out in Command Paper No. 6019").

74. Hansard 122 H.L. Deb. cs. 200-223. 10 March, 1942.

(Debate on Lord Davies rising "to direct attention to the situation in Palestine.")

75. Hansard 123 H.L. Deb. cs. 179-210. 9 June, 1942.

(Debate on Lord Wedgwood rising "to call attention to the importance of arming the Jews".)

76. Hansard 138 H.L. Deb. cs. 482-538. 10 December, 1945.

(Debate on Lord Altrincham rising "to call attention to the questions raised by the present situation of the Jews in Europe and Palestine".)

77. Hansard 142 H.L. Deb. cs. 1150-1222. 31 July, 1946.

(Debate on situation in Palestine on motion of Viscount Cranborne.)

78. Hansard 145 H.L. Deb. cs. 1-4. 21 January, 1947.

(Statement on situation in Palestine by First Lord of the Admiralty.)

79. Hansard 147 H.L. Deb. cs. 57-121. 23 April, 1947.

(Debate on Palestine on motion of Lord Altrincham.)

80. Hansard 151 H.L. Deb. cs. 934-939. 5 August, 1947.

(Statement by First Lord of the Admiralty on situation in Palestine.)

81. Hansard 151 H.L. Deb. cs. 1371-1397. 13 August, 1947.

(Debate on conditions in Palestine on motion of Viscount Long.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

B. OTHER OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

82. Drayton, R.H., ed. The laws of Palestine in force on the 31st day of December, 1933.

Vol. 1 Ordinances A-G
Vol. 2 Ordinances I-Z
Vol. 3 Imperial acts, Royal instructions, Orders, Proclamations and Rules. 3 vols. London, 1934.

- *83. French, L. Reports on agricultural development and land settlement in Palestine. Jerusalem, 1931-2.

(Contains First Report issued December, 1931, and Supplementary Report issued April, 1932. The two reports have continuous pagination but separate title-pages.)

- *84. League of Nations. Permanent Mandates Commission. Minutes of the first session held in Geneva, October 4th to 8th, 1921 -

(The Minutes of the sessions of the Permanent Mandates Commission contain much information relating to Palestine and are especially important for the reactions produced by the various proposals of the British Government. The last volume issued in the series is: "Minutes of the thirty-sixth session held at Geneva from June 8th to 29th, 1939". The following four consolidated indexes to the Minutes have been issued:-

Sessions 1-5, 1921-24
Sessions 6-10, 1925-26
Sessions 11-20, 1927-31
Sessions 21-30, 1932-36.)

Government of Palestine

85. Ordinances, Annual volume for 1925 (-35). 11 vols. Jerusalem, (1926-36).

86. Proclamations, Regulations, Rules, Orders and Notices. Annual volume for 1925 (-35). 11 vols. Jerusalem (1926-36).

From 1936 these two annual volumes were combined and issued as:-

87. Ordinances, Regulations, Rules, Orders and Notices. Annual volume for 1936 - Jerusalem -(1937).

88. Census of Palestine 1931 ... (with) Report and tables by E. Mills. 3 vols. Jerusalem, 1932-33.

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

- (Contains current statistical information of great value.)

- (Issued annually, numerous fields.) A summary of the year's statistics in

- (A valuable survey, based on official data, prepared for the information of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry. Aims in particular at supplementing the information contained in the Reports of the Peel and Woodhead Commissions - see entries nos. 15 and 18 supra.)

- * 94. United Nations. Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 11. United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Report to the General Assembly. 3 vols. Lake Success, 1947.

(Recommended that Palestine, after a transitional period of 2 years from 1st September, 1947, should be constituted into an independent Arab State, an independent Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem, such partition to involve the preservation of the Economic unity of the country. Vol. I contains the report and recommendations of the Committee, Vol. II annexes, which includes a list of principal documents and written statements submitted to the Special Committee; and Vol. III Oral evidence presented at public meetings.

95. U.S.A. Library of Congress. Legislative Reference Service. The Palestine problem. An analysis, historical and contemporary. Washington, March, 1947.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: FO 371/61797

C. OTHER WORKS

- *96. Abcarius, M.F. Palestine through the fog of propaganda.
London, 1946.

(Presents the Arab viewpoint.)

- *97. Anglo-Palestine Year Book, 1946. London (1946).

(The first edition of a reference book designed to be "a reliable guide to business men and all those who seek impartial and up-to-date information on Palestine".)

- *98. Antonius, G. The Arab awakening; story of the Arab national movement. 2 ed. London, 1946.

(This work, originally published in 1938, gives the most comprehensive available account of the genesis of the Arab national movement. "His presentation ... is that of an advocate, competent and sincere".)

- *99. Barbour, Nevill. Nisi Dominus. A survey of the Palestine controversy. London, 1946.

(A concise survey based on written sources and on six years' personal experiences in Palestine.)

100. Bentwich, N. Fulfilment in the promised land 1917-1937. London, 1938.

(An account of Jewish achievement in Palestine in the twenty years following 1917.)

- *101. Bentwich, N. England in Palestine. London, 1932.

("An attempt to describe the development of Palestine under British administration since 1917".)

102. Bentwich, N. ed. Legislation of Palestine 1919-25, including the Order in Council, Ordinances, etc. 2 vols. Alexandria, 1926.

- *103. Bentwich, N. Palestine. London, 1946.

(A survey from the Jewish stand-point of the tendencies and forces in Palestine.)

- *104. Cohen, I. The Zionist movement. London, 1945.

(The author has had a long and intimate connection with the Zionist movement. The bibliography is valuable.)

- *105. Crossman, Richard. Palestine mission: a personal record. London, 1947.

(Author was a member of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry and this is a vivid account of his experiences and impressions.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference:					
FO 371/61797					

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

106. Doukhan, M. ed. Laws of Palestine 1926-31 including the Orders in Council, Ordinances, etc. 4 vols. Tel-Aviv, 1932-33.

107. Duff, D. Palestine picture, London, 1936.

(A very readable presentation of the Arab case.)

*108. Edwardes, O.S. Palestine: Land of broken promise. A statement of the facts concerning Palestine and an examination of the Anglo-American Commission. London, 1945.
(A short study of the case for the Arab majority in Palestine.)

*109. Esco Foundation for Palestine, Inc. Palestine. A study of Jewish, Arab and British policies. 2 vols. Yale University, U.S.A. 1947.

(A very detailed and comprehensive American-Jewish survey Vol. II has a lengthy bibliography.)

110. Goadby, F.H. and Doukhan, M.J. The Land law of Palestine. Tel-Aviv, 1935.

111. Hanna, P.L. British Policy in Palestine. Washington, D.C., 1942.

(An American view of the Palestinian question, 1917-39. Dr. Hanna is critical of British policy. The book is well documented and has a valuable bibliography which includes many American works.)

112. Himadeh, Sa'id B. ed. Economic organisation of Palestine. Beirut, 1938.

(An economic survey made by the Social Science Research Section of the American University of Beirut. It is a comprehensive work and has a bibliography which is especially useful for its list of publications of the Government of Palestine, and for its many references to articles in local periodicals.)

113. Hooper, C.A. The civil law of Palestine and Trans-Jordan. 2 vols. Jerusalem, 1933-36.

114. Horowitz, D. and Hinden, R. Economic survey of Palestine with special reference to the years 1936 and 1937. Tel-Aviv, 1938.

(Sponsored by the Economic Research Institute of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Lacks an index.)

115. Hourani, A.H. Minorities in the Arab World. London, 1947.

(The study was prepared at request of Cairo Group of Royal Institute of International Affairs. See especially Chapter VI on Palestine.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference:					
FO 371/61797					

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

38

*116. Hourani, A.H. Syria and Lebanon. A political essay. London, 1946.

*117. Hyamson, A.M. Palestine: a policy. London, 1942.
(A short and moderate history of Zionism.)

*118. Jeffries, J.M.N. Palestine: the reality. London, 1939.

("The aim of the present book is to give this case (the Arabs) as simply as possible".)

*119. Jewish Agency for Palestine. The Jewish case before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry for Palestine, as presented by the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Statements and memoranda. Jerusalem, 1947.

120. Luke, Sir H. and Keith-Roach, E. The handbook of Palestine and Trans-Jordan. 3 ed. London, 1934.

(A useful survey for the general reader.)

121. McDonnell, Sir M., ed. The law reports of Palestine, being cases decided in the years 1920-35 inclusive by the Supreme Court of Palestine, etc. 2 vols. London, 1934-37.

*122. Magnes, Judah and Buber, Martin. Arab-Jewish unity. Testimony before the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission for the Ihud (Union) Association. London, 1947.

123. Main, E. Palestine at the crossroads. London, 1937.

(The author claims he has tried "to present a fair statement of the case". His conclusions strongly favour the Jews.)

124. Manufacturers Association of Palestine. Palestine industry 1944/45: official directory. Tel-Aviv (1945).

*125. Marlowe, J. Rebellion in Palestine. London, 1946.

(An account for the general reader, dealing in the main with events from 1917.)

126. Muenzner, G. Jewish labour economy in Palestine. London, 1945.

(An attempt "to present the general broad outline of the whole economic sector of Jewish trade unions in Palestine".)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference:					
FO 371/61797					

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

- (Prepared under the auspices of the American Palestine Institute. The most recent economic survey available. The notes contain valuable suggestions for further reading in the economic field.)

128. Pearlman, M. Collective adventure: an informal account of the communal settlements of Palestine. London, 1938.

- * 129. Royal Institute of International Affairs. Information Department Papers No. 20A. Great Britain and Palestine 1915-1939. London, 1939.

(A short factual survey which gives an admirable account of the period.)

- *130. Samuel, Rt. Hon. Viscount. Memoirs. London, 1945.

(Viscount Samuel was High Commissioner from 1920-1925, and his book contains a valuable commentary on the Palestine question over the period 1914-1942.)

131. Sidebotham, H. Great Britain and Palestine. London,
1937.

(The book is "Zionist in its sentiment" but "not written from the Jewish point of view".)

132. Stein, L. Zionism. 2 ed. London, 1932.

(The object of this book is to give the general reader a concise and objective account of the Zionist movement.)

- * 133. Weisman, Herman, L. The future of Palestine. An examination of the partition plan. New York, 1937.

("A critical examination of the proposals ... of the Royal Commission on Palestine".)

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
	1			2	

Reference:

FO 371/61797

1947

E

1184

35

PALESTINE

15 DEC

Registry
Number

E11844/46/31

FROM

Extract

No.

House of

Dated

Commons

Received
in Registry

debate

11.12.47

15 -

Subject, Situation

Extract of debate in House of
Commons opened by Mr. Creech Jones on
Dec. 11.

Last Paper

11/8/47

(Minutes.)

References

In P.P. 30 Minute Minutes 8/12
 ~ Extract (House Commons debate) 12/12
 - P.O. 3197 9/12
 - P.O. 2387 10/12
 - P.O. 3225 11/12

(Print)

(How disposed of)

H.B. 15/12

In P.P. G.R.D. 9 No 24 11/12

H.B. 15/12

(Action
completed)

J.C. 16/12

(Index)

Next Paper
(11921)

11847

1
2
3
4
5
6


Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

tes. 36 feet E. with

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.



- On this basis, the following preliminary notes are submitted for consideration as a brief for the Secretary of State's speech. It has been assumed that we should maintain the policy which has hitherto been followed of not lecturing the Arabs on their duties as loyal members of the United Nations etc.

to t
atte
eigh

This not only made it impossible to carry out the objectives of the mandate - a Jewish national home without prejudice to the rights of the existing inhabitants - but it also made impossible the devolution of our authority and the establishment of representative institutions. We could never find a formula on which both sides would join in elections.

here/

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
	1			2	

Reference:

FO 371 / 61797

37

here, and put forward the two sets of proposals known as the Bevin and Morrison plans. These provided for a cantonal system with considerable local autonomy. Neither side accepted it then, though the Arabs put forward something extremely like it in their later than eleventh hour attempt to avert partition in New York. If they had accepted it here in February events might have followed a different course. ~~The Arabs have only themselves to blame if their intransigence has given an opportunity to the other side to mobilise its influence.~~

" Now the United Nations have made their recommendation. While generally accepted by the Jews it has been totally rejected by the Arab States. We have no obligation under the Mandate or any other agreement to set up an Arab or Jewish state by force or to coerce one community in the interests of the other. We shall not obstruct the United Nations, but in withdrawing from Palestine we shall take great care not to become responsible as we go for enforcing this or any other settlement not accepted by both Arabs and Jews. We feel that we have the right to demand in return that our withdrawal is not disturbed by either side. We shall have to maintain law and order while ~~we are still in control~~. That period will be as short as is physically possible, and during it we shall continue to hold the balance as we have always tried to do. We shall resist with all our power disturbers of the peace from whatever quarter they come.

" Thus far it is possible to speak with assurance. We shall be in charge and we know what we shall do. But I shall no doubt be expected to say something of what will come after. We assume that we shall hand over to a United Nations Commission who will have arrived in Palestine shortly before the termination of our civil authority there. No British forces or administration will be available to them as their instruments for enforcing partition. ~~The activities of our troops who will be in Palestine for a short time thereafter, will be confined to their own protection and speedy evacuation.~~ The United Nations Commission is apparently not to have any external force at its command, but intends to rely on Arab and Jewish militias formed in Palestine. ~~It would be idle and dangerous to speculate at this stage whether the Commission will be able to carry out its task with the help of these forces, or whether, as has been suggested in some quarters, there will have to be a reference to the Security Council, and if so, with what result.~~ ~~It is not for us to lecture either side on their responsibilities.~~ It has always been and still remains our greatest wish that a settlement by agreement might eventually be reached. This is still unfortunately a long way from being in sight.

If/

12 DEC 1947
S. H. TO DEPT.

until the mandate is terminated

In the short period between

the termination of the mandate and completion of our evacuation we shall no longer have this responsibility and will take no action except what may be necessary for the protection & speedy evacuation of our troops & stores.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

B)

by aiding in
the establishment
of an independent
& self-governing
Palestine. We

which we hope
to develop to
take account
of changed
circumstances
& of the regional
security of the
Middle East.
as a whole

4 Our present treaties with some Middle Eastern States provide for immediate co-operation in the event of war, subject to the overriding provisions of the United Nations Charter. These treaties will of course apply in the event of aggression against the Arab States/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

39

States concerned. We realise the apprehensions of the Arab States, but we do not believe that the United Nations decision gives any basis for any such aggression."

Handwritten signature
p. 12

Our difficulty over Palestine is to adopt a policy which will command national support without fatally embittering the Middle East countries on whose friendship the maintenance of our whole strategic, political and economic position in the Middle East depends.

2. The U.N.O. decision on partition is acceptable to the Jews but not to any of the Middle East countries. At this moment when the scales have tipped so heavily against them their friendship with us is in the balance also. There is little enough that we can say to try and preserve that friendship but this makes it all the more desirable to go as far as we can. I hope, therefore, that the Secretary of State may feel able to take the line suggested above, and not less.

MR Lough

9th December, 1947.

Handwritten note:
The last
para seems
dangerous
in view of
the fact
that Russia
is the main

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1
2
3
4
5
6

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
Reference: **FO 371/61797**

E 40

11844
15 DEC

EXTRACT FROM
HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES
11 DEC 1947

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2			

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

41

PALESTINE

Motion made, and Question proposed,
"That this House do now adjourn."—
[Mr. William Whiteley.]

3.52 p.m.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Creech Jones): On 29th November, the General Assembly of the United Nations resolved, by a decisive vote, that Palestine should be partitioned. The decision is momentous, and the Government desire to inform the House of the position of the United Kingdom in the matter, and of the steps which will be taken to end our responsibilities under the Mandate. Palestine was last discussed in this House shortly before the Committee which had been set up by the Special Assembly of the United Nations had reported. The efforts which have been made by the Government in recent years to secure some reconciliation of interests as between Jews and Arabs inside the Mandate, and the various schemes submitted in the hope of establishing political co-operation and security in Palestine, are now a matter of history and have received the attention of the House.

Parliament is also fully aware of the reasons which finally led to the reference of the Palestine problem to the United Nations, and I need not cover that ground again. In all these discussions—in fact, ever since the abandonment of the partition recommendations made by the Peel Commission—the solution envisaged was within the structure of a unitary state, expressed from time to time in a variety of forms, with Jews and Arabs sharing in the government. The Government found nothing in the Mandate to entitle them to impose by force on either community a solution unacceptable to the other. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary told the House on 18th February this year:

"... if the conflict has to be resolved by arbitrary decision, that is not a decision which His Majesty's Government are empowered as Mandatory to take."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 18th February, 1947; Vol. 433, c. 988.]

It was obvious that in the absence of agreement and because of the irreconcilable nature of the interests involved, not only was the Mandate unworkable, but also, in its place, no trusteeship agreement could be made to cover the period until Palestine achieved independence.

The Government have felt throughout that they should make every effort to win a settlement without recourse to force. The violence of the past weeks fully confirms the Government in the steps they took to try to obtain from the two communities concerned some mutual accommodation inside or outside the Mandate. The perpetuation of the Mandate regime implied increasingly active and costly military commitments, and a situation deteriorating by lawlessness, terrorism, and non co-operation by the Jewish community with the Government. Faced with Jewish demands and Arab refusal, we could not, under the Mandate, establish either a Jewish State or an Arab State in Palestine by force, nor could we coerce either people in the interest of the other.

By reference of the question of Palestine to the United Nations, we asked that organisation to make an unfettered examination of the problem. I pointed out to the House that our sincerity as a nation was manifest by our reference of the problem to the United Nations. For reasons which I have previously given to the House, we suggested to the United Nations no particular solution. Manifestly, having asked the United Nations for advice, we could not then proceed to shape the advice which the Assembly would give, nor could we hope to secure acceptance of plans and proposals which had already proved unacceptable to the parties. A free judgment by the United Nations, without any suspicion or prejudice which might be engendered by Britain urging proposals of her own, seemed to His Majesty's Government, in all the circumstances, to be the wisest course to take.

We did, however, give all possible assistance to the Special Committee and to subsequent committees set up to study the problem. Sir Alexander Cadogan expressly stated to the United Nations at the Special Assembly, that the United Kingdom Government ought not to have "the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties, and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience."

The Special Committee of the United Nations reported, in due course, to the General Assembly, that the Mandate should be terminated and that Palestine should proceed to independence. A majority of the Committee favoured a partition plan. The substance of the Report

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

throughout
effort to win
to force.
s fully con-
steps they
e two com-
ual accom-

e Mandate.
date regime
and costly
a situation
terrorism,
Jewish com-
Faced with
refusal, we
e, establish
Arab State
d we coerce
f the other.

on of Pales-
e asked that
tered exam-
nted out to
as a nation
ence of the
tions. For
sly given to
the United
Manifestly,
Nations for
proceed to
e Assembly
pe to secure
posals which
table to the
y the United
ion or pre-
endered by
f her own,
overnment, in
e the wisest

all possible
mmittee and
up to study
er Cadogan
d Nations at
the United
not to have
forcing a solu-
both parties,
ile with our

the United
course, to the
he Mandate
at Palestine
ce. A major-
red a parti-
of the Report

of the Special Committee is known to the House. Without any loss of time, on 26th September, the Government informed the United Nations that we would surrender the Mandate, and that we agreed that Palestine should enjoy independent status.

I made it clear at Lake Success that the British Government were not prepared to impose, by force of arms, a settlement which was not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews in Palestine and that, in the absence of such a settlement, the Government must plan for the early withdrawal of British Forces and administration from Palestine. I should add, also, that in the discussions at the United Nations Assembly I re-emphasised that I could not easily imagine circumstances in which the United Kingdom would wish to prevent the application of a settlement recommended by the General Assembly. Nor did I fail to assert that His Majesty's Government would not carry sole or major responsibility for the administration of Palestine and for enforcing changes which the United Nations regarded as necessary. I made every effort to persuade delegations that enforcement must be regarded as an integral part of any new policy by the United Nations in Palestine.

The announcement of our intention to end the Mandate and to withdraw the Forces was universally welcomed. All subsequent study of the Special Committee's Reports on the Palestine problem at United Nations, proceeded with the position of His Majesty's Government well understood by the delegations there. During these discussions, various nations proposed either that the British administration and Forces should continue in Palestine for security reasons while a partition policy was being applied; or that Britain should transfer its authority direct to the respective Arab and Jewish States which were being proposed; or that there could be a period in which both the British and the United Nations authority could operate while the latter was imposing a partition scheme.

All such proposals were inconsistent with the policy that His Majesty's Government had laid down. They were, sometimes, designed by others to entangle Britain in shaping, and accepting the responsibility, for the schemes evolved, and a part-d maintaining British Arms to enforce

any scheme agreed upon. We have been criticised for this attitude of refusing to depart from the principles which His Majesty's Government laid down. In all this work we have sought to be co-operative with the United Nations and to avoid a negative attitude, whether in the work of the main Committee or the two sub-Committees—one concerned with the Arab plan of a unitary state, and the other with the plan of partition. Our officials and delegates gave all the help in their power. They provided factual information relevant to the matters under discussion based on our experience. But frequently they had to remind the Committees of the position and of the declaration which His Majesty's Government had made.

Before the conclusion of the discussions, Sir Alexander Cadogan announced on behalf of the Government that the withdrawal of our Forces and administration would be effected by 1st August, 1948, and that so long as British troops remained in any part of Palestine they would maintain law and order in the area of which they were still in occupation. A civil administration would not necessarily be maintained by His Majesty's Government throughout this period. We reserved the right to lay down the Mandate and to bring civil administration to an end at any time. His Majesty's Government would not wish to impede, he said, the implementation of any scheme approved by the General Assembly.

It is important that I should emphasise that we have been actuated throughout by the desire to bring the parties concerned to a realisation of the grave reactions which may arise in Palestine with the withdrawal of British administration, and how imperative is a settlement between the two communities. If His Majesty's Government were persuaded that their only proper course was to withdraw from Palestine—particularly in view of the dangers and losses experienced by our Forces and the necessity on financial and political grounds of ending commitments in Palestine—we certainly did not wish to leave Palestine in disorder after the tremendous and costly contribution Britain had made in developing Palestine and discharging our responsibilities under the Mandate.

Right up to the last at the United Nations, our delegates, therefore, directed

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

43

1217

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1218

[Mr. Creech Jones.]
attention to the problem of implementing and enforcing any scheme decided upon, and to the fact that British troops could not be used as the instrument of the United Nations for enforcing a decision against either community. I am sure that the House will agree that this was in accordance with the mood of our country as well as being politically wise. We were now surrendering an international instrument, and transferring authority, quite properly, to the appropriate international authority. That body was now engaged in determining the status of Palestine in the future and the form its structure of government should take. It was not for Britain, after it had given so much, to take up again the heavy commitments of bringing a new order fashioned by the United Nations into being in the face of new conflict.

It is a tragic fact that no conciliation of the conflicting interests of Jews and Arabs was possible at Lake Success. The long debates were sometimes recriminatory, but the open debates demonstrated to the world the intractable nature of the problem and the intransigent character of the parties. The plan which emerged is still bitterly opposed by a strong minority of the United Nations, which denies the justice of the decision.

Mr. Stokes (Ipswich): Hear, hear.

Mr. Creech Jones: It must be said that the plan makes little provision for enforcement. Difficulties which may arise in Palestine may be referred to the Security Council of the United Nations for consideration and instructions. The substitute authority—the United Nations Commission of five drawn from five small states—will assume administrative responsibility and transfer authority directly to what governments or authorities it may create in Palestine.

A State of Jerusalem will be created under the administrative responsibility of the Trusteeship Council. It is proposed that a seaport and hinterland in the Jewish area should be evacuated at an early stage to permit of substantial immigration. The boundaries of the new states have been varied in important details from those recommended in the Partition Report of the Special Committee. It is not for me at this stage to examine critically the proposals in this new

scheme. It has been adopted by the Assembly, and possibly certain aspects of it may be modified in the light of experience. I would like to mention, however, that certain of the essential features hark back to the various ideas expressed in the schemes associated with the names of my right hon. Friends the Lord President and the Foreign Secretary. But it was not until the recent meetings at Lake Success that the Jewish community officially accepted, or announced acceptance of the device of partition.

During the many debates the competence of the General Assembly to take any action along the lines now adopted was challenged on legal grounds. But the Assembly has voted, has offered its advice, and taken steps for action to proceed as it has directed. The Assembly was told that Great Britain would not obstruct any decision taken, and its result would be loyally accepted in so far as its terms did not conflict with the conditions His Majesty's Government had announced during the discussions. The decision of the Assembly is regarded by His Majesty's Government as the decision of a court of international opinion.

This is not a grudging acceptance, as a distinguished newspaper suggested. We have no desire to create new difficulties for the United Nations, or to encourage disorder and violence in Palestine, or to see undone, by resulting chaos, the great work which our Administration has performed since we took up the Mandate. We wish our authority transferred to our successors in an orderly manner. We can only express our hope that there will be by the parties a careful weighing up of the consequences of conflict and that no provocation may be indulged in by either of the principal communities concerned—indeed that the greatest respect will be shown for the decision of the international authority. That view has been made widely known to all concerned in the Middle East.

The Members of the Commission of the United Nations who are to apply the new policy have not yet been selected by their respective Governments. Our spokesman at the Assembly has not only notified the Assembly, but made representations already to the Secretary-General, regarding the preliminary arrangements for the work of this Commission. The outline plan which has been made by His Majesty's

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Government for withdrawal has been communicated to him and put forward as a basis for negotiation with the Commission. We hope that the Commission will be able to accept our proposals for terminating the Mandate and for taking up their own authority in Palestine.

I repeat that His Majesty's Government intend to withdraw troops from Palestine by 1st August, 1948.

Mr. Stokes: Too late.

Mr. Creech Jones: In order that the withdrawal may be conducted in the most orderly manner, and with the least disruption of the ordinary life of the country, it is essential that the Mandatory power should retain undivided control of the country until the evacuation is well under way. It will be appreciated that the mandatory responsibility for government in Palestine cannot be relinquished piecemeal. The whole complex of governmental responsibilities must be relinquished by the Mandatory Government for the whole of Palestine on an appointed day. As I have indicated, once our military withdrawal is properly under way, the forces necessary for exercising this responsibility will no longer be adequately available, and it will not, therefore, be possible to retain full mandatory responsibility after a certain date. The Mandate will, therefore, be terminated some time in advance of the completion of the withdrawal, and the date we have in mind for this, subject to negotiation with the United Nations Commission, is 15th May.

I would repeat that, in our view, undivided control is essential until the Mandate is relinquished. As His Majesty's Government have made it clear that they cannot take part in the implementation of the United Nations plan, it will be undesirable for the Commission to arrive in Palestine until a short period before the termination of the Mandate. For reasons of administrative efficiency, responsibility and security, this overlap period should be comparatively brief. But much preliminary work can be done by the Commission outside Palestine before then, as I shall explain. The period till then is not long, if the Commission is to acquaint itself with the problems it has to tackle, and to make suitable arrangements for the assumption of its responsibilities in Palestine.

Once the Mandate has been terminated our troops remaining in Palestine will be

responsible only for maintaining order in those areas in which they are still in occupation, with the limited object of ensuring that their final withdrawal is not impeded, and that it should be completed in the shortest possible time. The House would not wish me, for security reasons, to enter into details of the plan of withdrawal of our Forces. It is our purpose to cause the least possible disruption to the economy of the country, and to interfere as little as possible with the normal trade, especially the citrus trade. We desire to carry out an orderly withdrawal producing the minimum dislocation in the country, and evacuating the greatest possible quantity of valuable Service stores now located there. This period, until 1st August, is also not too long to enable this to be done. It may be impossible to remove all our stores, but obviously we must incur no more loss than is inevitable, and make arrangements, where possible, for subsequent removal.

We do not know, of course, the degree of Arab opposition to the implementation of the United Nations plan. During the withdrawal of our administration and troops we are confident that both Arabs and Jews will show restraint and not become embroiled with our people. There are counsellors of moderation among the Arabs as well as those who demand violent action. Both are found in Palestine and the surrounding Arab states. There is a diversion and variety of view and interest among the Arab states. But there can be little doubt that the Commission of the United Nations, once it arrives in Palestine, will have no little difficulty in meeting its responsibilities, setting up the proposed Arab authorities and enforcing the plan. The Palestine Arab Higher Committee has already stated that it will not nurse the United Nations Commission in any way.

The Jews in their turn are also confronted with a tremendous task during the next few years in establishing their state. It is hoped that each side will show forbearance and tolerance in a decision which, in the nature of things, is imposed. The Security Council may have to be invoked by the United Nations Commission if insurmountable difficulties occur. It is disturbing that the Commission will go to its task with inadequate support for its decisions.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

73 L 40

I should now say a few words on the problem of immigration. I do not wish to inflame deep feelings which exist among Jews and Arabs alike regarding this

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

The Trusteeship Council is charged with the elaboration and approval of a detailed

This tragic chapter should not be ended without my paying some recognition to the splendid contribution of all those who have served Britain in fulfilment of the mandatory obligations. I should like publicly to thank Sir Alexander Cadogan and our fine team of officials who have helped us so much in our work at the United Nations—and I include also the men in our Foreign and Colonial Offices. They have been the

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

73 T. 42

Like the right hon. Gentleman, I have no intention this afternoon of discussing, in any detail, the decision of the United Nations organisation. That decision is

1 2 3 4 5 6
 1 2
 Reference: **EO 371 / 61797**

now out of our hands; it is no longer the responsibility of His Majesty's Government, and one which the Government must defend in bulk. As members of the United Nations, whatever we may think of the decision, we can only accept it as a decision which has been given by them under the constitution to which we have assented. But this, I think, I am entitled to say. For long, I have been a believer in the principle of partition, but in the particular scheme of partition which the United Nations have approved, I find many details with which I personally disagree. I hope, therefore, that the details of this scheme are not going to be regarded by the United Nations as the laws of the Medes and Persians, given once and for all, but that, when passions die down, if agreement can be found between the various parties for alteration of the details, such agreement will be facilitated by the United Nations, and that any agreement, when arrived at, will be executed by them.

I want to say at once that, so far as I am concerned, and I think I can speak for the great majority of my hon. Friends, in the existing circumstances we see no alternative to the decision of His Majesty's Government to lay down the Mandate and evacuate Palestine at the earliest possible moment. But to say that, in the existing circumstances, we see no alternative to this course, does not mean that this is a moment at which we feel either happiness or pride. Events in Palestine are in tragic contrast to the hopes of many in the past. I am afraid it will be a humiliating end to the honourable role which hitherto we have played in that country, very different indeed from the dream of those who first inspired the idea, very different from the object for which many thousands of our fellow citizens worked, indeed, died in Palestine. We have always foreseen that the time would come when we should leave that country.

Indeed, it is implicit in the Mandate that that time should come and that it should be our duty to make it come as soon as possible, but we did imagine ourselves leaving with the affection and gratitude of Jew and Arab alike, leaving behind us a country which was settled, which might have been filled with happy memories of the past and with proud hopes for the future. Instead, I am afraid that when we leave we shall leave

as a target for hostility for both sides and with all we have done—and we have done much in these 30 years—forgotten. I am afraid when we march to the sea we shall leave behind a country rent with internecine strife and seething with the most bitter hostility.

When we talk about the Palestinian problem we must not talk as if any decision we are taking today has led to a solution to that problem. All that has happened is that the problem has been transferred and the responsibilities and dangers which we were not prepared to face are now to be borne by the United Nations. I believe that much of this might have been avoided. I believe that the circumstances which now make it inevitable need never have arisen. Had we, in the last two years, had a clear, definite and decisive policy, we might have achieved the end which the inspirers of this great idea had in mind.

I do not pretend it was possible anywhere to find a policy which would have met with universal support. As I have often said in this House, I have myself been a supporter of the policy of partition. I am not going to pretend that that was an easy policy, one which met with universal support, either here or abroad; I am only too conscious that many of my hon. Friends, viewing this problem with equal sincerity with myself, took quite a different view as to what would have led ultimately to the well-being of Palestine. No doubt any other alternative which could have been proposed would always have been opposed both here and in Palestine. There never was a chance, therefore, of finding a solution which was going to be agreed by all. You never expect to find that in any major political problem; there is no real fundamental problem in our lives in which we have expected to find every one agreed.

If we are always to be frightened off by fear of opposition, would anything ever be settled? The decision on the part of the Government to wait until a unanimous approval was secured—until the impossible had happened—has led inevitably first, to months of frustration and increasing tension, secondly, to reference to U.N.O. without a recommendation from us—however skilfully wrapped up it is now exposed to the world that we had no solution to offer—thirdly, to the inability of this country even to say whether the

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

[Mr. Stanley.]

solution which the United Nations proposed was right or wrong, and finally, to this now inevitable conclusion, the surrender of the Mandate and the evacuation of our troops.

But that is in the past. What we are concerned with now is the very difficult and dangerous future, and today's Debate will, I hope, be chiefly concerned with such practical details and practical consequences of the decision which has been taken. I believe that, now, the most important thing of all is for us to get out as soon as we possibly can. By staying in Palestine we are doing no good to any one. It is quite impossible for us effectively to impose an authority which everybody knows is shortly to be terminated. You have only to read the newspapers—the statement in "The Times" today—to see that everything which happens in Palestine is now being attributed to us, however unjustly. We are being blamed impartially by both sides whatever happens, and hostility on both sides is growing day by day.

Meanwhile, many thousands of our fellow citizens are having to live in conditions of great danger and of actual loss. Therefore, I am sure it is the primary concern of this House that, the decision to leave Palestine having been taken, it should now be implemented with the greatest practicable speed. I must confess that I was extremely disappointed at the statement made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies with regard to the date of the handing over of the Mandate. It is not only that I hoped it might have been possible to find a date earlier than 15th May, but I was even more disturbed to understand from what he said that that date—15th May—had not been laid down definitely, was not our last, final and conclusive word, but was to be the subject of some further discussion and decision.

We must impress on the Government how strongly we feel about this question of the date. We recognise, of course, that we have a responsibility as the retiring trustee. We have a responsibility, too, as a member of the United Nations and we have, therefore, to give adequate time to the United Nations to set up and to improvise the new machinery which must be evolved. There must be somebody and something to which we can hand over. I certainly wish we had seen more sign

73 L 44

in the past that the United Nations were treating this problem of implementing their decision with anything like the urgency and importance that they have attached to discussing their decision; and that we had a clearer sign that they were going to proceed from the easy task of talking about what they are going to do to the much more difficult task of planning how they are going to do it.

I feel that it is absolutely vital—and this is a point which I am sure all my hon. Friends on this side will stress—that we should affix, here and now, the final date by which we intend to hand over the Mandate. Nothing except that will, I think, bring to the United Nations the sense of urgency which this problem demands. So long as they believe that further time can be gained by more negotiations, that if they are not ready the date can be pushed further back, so long as they are not brought up against it completely and finally then so long will some of the delays we see continue.

His Majesty's Opposition hopes that a different turn will be given in the reply to the Debate—which is to be made, I believe, by the Foreign Secretary—from the statement which has been made by the Colonial Secretary, that a definite, final, date will be given beyond which we do not maintain our authority in Palestine, whatever may have happened. I am sure that unless that is done we shall find ourselves still holding tenuously on to this authority for months, maybe for years, ahead. It is very essential that there should be brought home to the United Nations the amount of work which remains for them to do and the speed at which, therefore, they have to go about it. Naturally, in thinking of the machinery that is to be set up our minds turn, first of all, to the question of law and order.

That is supremely important, but it is not the only task which the United Nations have to be ready to meet. Palestine is not by any means a primitive State: it has reached a state of development where, even if law and order is maintained, chaos may ensue if other services collapse. If the whole financial position of Palestine is allowed to lapse unemployment on a large scale may result. If transport organisations break down, not only internally, the life of Palestine and our evacuation may be upset. If health services are allowed to

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

lapse the country may be swept with epidemics in which, again, our own Army may be involved. I am sure that the Government will lose no opportunity of impressing on the United Nations the necessity for a speedy consideration of the problems which so soon will confront them.

I want to say a few words now on the special problems which confront us. First, on the question of authority, I was very glad to hear the Colonial Secretary make the unequivocal statement that so long as we retained the Mandate authority will be ours, and ours alone. I was glad to hear him explain the proposals for Tel-Aviv and Jaffa, which put a different complexion on the matter from the summarised reports which the Press have sometimes given. I assume that it is not a question of handing over either of these towns to the Jews or to the Arabs. The Jewish and Arab police, in the two towns respectively, will continue to work as they do now, under the authority of the officers of the Palestine Police and then of the Governor and the civil administration. This is merely a convenient way of bringing into the various towns those junior ranks who will be most suitable there.

The second point on which I think we need a further assurance is with regard to the future of the general Colonial Service, of the local Palestine services and, above all, the Palestine Police. We must not forget that until the last few weeks enlistment was still going on for the Police, and that people were still being offered a man's job. It is clear that these Colonial servants now in Palestine cannot merely be treated on the basis of the abolition of a particular office. As the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies knows, there are special pension arrangements on the abolition of office, but they are not wholly satisfactory; they are not very generous and they are, in fact, quite inadequate to a situation such as this, where it is not a question of the abolition of a particular office but the abolition of a whole and important section of the work of the Colonial Service. I therefore hope that before long—because this is not a matter on which we need negotiate with the United Nations; we can decide for ourselves—we shall hear proposals for these three elements which, if they are to err at all, will err on the side of generosity.

We must also insist, soon, on a much more detailed statement as to what will become of Government property in Palestine, what will happen to private businesses now being conducted there, and what will happen to the concessions which are now enjoyed. I know that the question of concessions was dealt with in the Committee's report, but we are entitled to know what plans the Colonial Office are making to ensure that the rights which have been legitimately acquired are not prejudiced under the new plan now proposed. The Minister told us a great deal of what the plan for immigration in the interval should or should not do, but omitted to tell us what the plan was. At the end of his statement on immigration I had no conception at all of what the Government intended to permit between now and the time for handing over the Mandate. So long as we retain authority that is something which lies within our capacity, and not within that of the United Nations. It is clear that some alterations will have to be made because, apart from anything else, if the evacuation of our troops is to be completed Cyprus must be cleared. Those now in Cyprus must be returned to Palestine.

So much for the position up to 15th May which, I hope, will be regarded as the conclusive and final date. Now for the position between 15th May and 1st August, which is the latest date by which our troops will remain in Palestine. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman made it clear that after 15th May our troops will remain in Palestine only because it has been impossible to get them away before, that they will be there only to evacuate themselves and their warlike stores and not to carry out the sort of role in that country for which they have so long been responsible under His Majesty's Government. It is right to make it quite clear that these troops will not be available for police duties under the authority of the United Nations. It would be intolerable if that were to be a condition.

I am quite sure that although that position is right, and one which we must maintain, Members will recognise what a difficult position it will be, how difficult it will be for British troops in that country to protect themselves and their immediate surroundings and to have to ignore perhaps bloodshed and riots going on not far

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

[Mr. Stanley.] away from them. It is because the position will be so difficult that all of us want to see that stay shortened as much as possible. I have had occasion several times to talk on the matter of economy, but I assure the right hon. Gentleman that in this case, so urgent are the reasons for our withdrawing and so great are the dangers of our remaining, it may well be wise policy to hasten this evacuation, even at the risk of some increased material loss owing to inability to remove certain stores.

Lastly, the Government have said before and it has been reiterated today by the right hon. Gentleman, that the Government are not prepared to enforce partition upon unwilling participants. I believe that that decision is right. It would be an impossible position if British troops and British police were expected to enforce a decision to which His Majesty's Government have never given their assent. There is all the difference between enforcing partition, and facilitating the work of the United Nations Commission. I agree that it is not right for us to bear the brunt of enforcing a decision from which His Majesty's Government abstain, but I am equally certain that it is right that we, as a member of the United Nations and as people who have an interest in the future of Palestine and an interest in our troops still remaining, to facilitate as much as possible the difficult work of the Commission which will take over.

I certainly gathered from the speech of the Colonial Secretary that that was his view, and that between now and 15th May all facilities will be given to this Commission to assume, with as little delay as possible, the various offices and functions when the day of the transfer comes.

Mr. Mikardo (Reading): Would not the right hon. Gentleman say that the announcement made by my right hon. Friend that the Five Power Commission were to be kept out of Palestine until a little before 15th May, is the very opposite of facilitating their work?

Mr. Stanley: I can see certain difficulties that might arise either by having too little or too much overlap between the two authorities. We cannot have two Kings of Brentford. But that will not prevent officials of the Commission coming in beforehand. I would suggest that

it might not prevent, not the whole Commission, but say the chairman or one of the members also coming, in such a way as not to offer an alternative to the authority of our Government, and being there for a somewhat longer time.

Mr. Sydney Silverman (Nelson and Colne): That would include the administrative staffs.

Mr. Stanley: Certainly. I assume that the administrative staffs will be brought in and will be taught their jobs as soon as they are available. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will realise the necessity for making the transfer as smooth as possible in the interests of everybody. As I tried to show before, it is in nobody's interest that law and order and other vital services should break down at the time when the transfer is made.

This may be the end of the chapter. I do not believe that it is the end of the story. We are now on the verge of abandoning our authority and of laying down our responsibility, but I am sure that this country will never lose its interest in, or its concern for, Palestine. We have a particular interest which comes from years of past association, and from years of effort, hope and achievement which we have seen in that country. We have the general interest that all shall share in a part of the world which we want to see made to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world as a whole.

Therefore, I feel that, whoever we are, there is one thing on which we can unite. Wherever we sit in this House, wherever our past sympathies in this problem have lain, and however we may regard the present solution, all of us, I am sure, will unite to condemn any attempt by either side to solve this problem by force of arms. We read of many explosive statements in the Middle East today, and we see only too clearly how, with an inflammable population, explosive statements can result in disastrous action. We see the advice given to the peoples there to shoot it out. I believe that that will do no good to anybody. Whatever the military results of a civil war in Palestine might be, I am sure that to the great mass of the people it can bring nothing but bloodshed and chaos, and it can only result in Palestine having to remain for years in the economic

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

abyss from which the rest of the world
is trying to climb.

I am sure that people in Palestine will realise, and can be made to realise, that the future can hold for them better things than just the bomb, the bullet and the knife. After all, here is the solution of the United Nations, in other words, the solution of the nations of the world assembled together. A particular responsibility is therefore imposed upon the United Nations—upon the nations of the world as a whole—for the country for which their solution has been accepted. I believe that that particular responsibility is not only negative. It is not only the negative one that aggression must not be allowed to sabotage the solution, but a constructive one, too, of ensuring that the solution that they propose can be made a success of by the people, if they so desire. It carries with it an obligation on all members of the United Nations to help, and indeed to make sacrifices, for the economic prosperity of that area.

I hope, therefore, far distant as those hopes may seem today in the growing unrest and violence which, unfortunately, we see in that country, that the day may come when the Palestine which is now to be divided may unite in a wider interest in the Middle East. All of us feel that, upon economic grounds alone, that area of the world is never likely, except through some form of unity, to achieve the new standard which the Arabs themselves are beginning to reach. Far away as the prospect may seem to us today, the act of division which we are now having to accept may, in the long run, prove to be the prelude to a still wider unification. If and when that day comes we, in present circumstances, shall not be able to claim any credit; at least we shall be able to feel that our efforts and achievements in the past have not been wasted and that the labours and sacrifices of our people will have met with a reward.

5.8 p.m.

Mr. Ivor Thomas (Keighley): One of the difficulties in Debates on Palestine has been that our sympathies can become engaged much too easily on one side or on the other. The two right hon. Gentlemen who have so far spoken in the Debate have given us an admirable lesson in objectivity, which I shall try to follow. I must confess, however, that

there is one party in this matter with whom my sympathies readily become engaged, that is the British administrators and British troops who have given such an example of patience, courage and forbearance in the most difficult of tasks which this country has had to face for a long time. To all of them, from Sir Alan Cunningham downwards, I am sure the House would like to express its warmest gratitude and its best hopes for that most difficult part of the chapter which is now opening.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies has made an eloquent and cogent defence of the policy of His Majesty's Government. I fear, however, that even his grave words did not do full justice to the sombre pageant which is now opening before us in the Middle East. I have weighed my words carefully, and I think it is no exaggeration to say that unless there is a marked change of heart we shall see the obliteration of many Jewish communities in the Middle East, we shall see a long and squalid warfare—the warfare of the gunman and bombardier in the back street—in which the Jewish national home will probably be engulfed, and we shall see the United Nations, already to some extent discredited both by the lines of the solution and by the methods taken to obtain it, shaken to its foundations.

Mr. Janner (Leicester, West): Will my hon. Friend say on what grounds he suggests the United Nations conclusions have been discredited? If he looks at the list of nations who have agreed to those conclusions he will find the conclusions are held by the vast majority of the nations, and certainly by all the independent nations.

Mr. Thomas: Surely, my hon. Friend cannot have failed to notice the immense pressure that was used in bringing about the solution.

Mr. Janner: Nonsense. Would my hon. Friend suggest that Australia, Canada and New Zealand were under any pressure?

Mr. Thomas: My hon. Friend must really be very ingenuous if he believes what he has said. I cannot believe that the solution has come about wholly by the force of reason. The solution itself contains many obvious defects. The right hon. Member for East Bristol—

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

chairman of the United Nations Special Committee made contact with the leader of this illegal movement while he was there, I am bound to say that I think it is a grave abuse of the hospitality which was accorded him. In this pamphlet the commander of the Irgun Zvai Leumi is alleged to claim that they will not accept partition and that they intend to do all they can to resist it. Therefore, can we wonder at the attitude which has been taken by the Arabs towards partition?

In my view there is only one hope for a solution to this problem. It is that the Arabs on their side should be willing to accept partition within the frontiers now proposed, or, at least, within revised frontiers drawn with more knowledge of the problems of Palestine; while the Jews on their part should surrender their claim to unlimited immigration. Immigration is the key to this problem. It is the Arabs' fear that they are going to be flooded by millions of immigrants that creates the problem, not the relatively small amount of territory that is involved. We cannot hope to solve the problem of the Jewish displaced persons in Palestine. That has been recognised by the United Nations Organisation itself.

There are hundreds of thousands of Jews who hope to get out of Europe. We are in the middle of one of the great secular movements of the Jewish people. It has been going on since about 1890—a great movement of Jews out of Russia westwards into Europe, on to the New World, and now into Palestine. It is out of the question to think that Palestine can absorb all these numbers. The Jews should accept the fact that Palestine cannot absorb all the Jews who wish to leave the countries in which they are at present. Even so, partition will achieve for them what they have said is their major aim: it will achieve a national home. The complaint of the Zionist Organisation has always been that the Jews throughout the world have a feeling of homelessness. They have said, "Give us a State, and then this feeling of homelessness, which make us wanderers throughout the world, will be removed." If the Arabs would be willing on their part to accept the Jewish State, within something like the frontiers now proposed, and if the Jews on their part would be willing to surrender the claim to unlimited immigration, then there would be a possibility of a solution.

73 M 1

It is late to advance the suggestion, but I should like to see the Arab and Jewish communities facing the prospect that lies before them. Unless they attempt to come to some solution there is a grim prospect that the best hopes on either side are likely to be deluged in blood. It is with small hope that the parties will come to an agreement that I make this suggestion; but unless it is adopted, I am bound to confess that the prospect before us will be one that fills me with horror.

5.23 p.m.

Mr. A. R. W. Low (Blackpool, North): I am in the position of a comparatively inexperienced man in these affairs, following as I do the Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) and the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Ivor Thomas) who have studied these matters very closely and have given of their best in the service of their country in so doing. I am sure that the House will not expect me to achieve the same high standard they reached. I do hope, however, that I shall follow them, at least, in their fairness and objectivity. The hon. Member for Keighley has made it very difficult for me to make my speech without boring the House, because so much of what he said I had hoped to say; but, perhaps, that is to the advantage of hon. Gentlemen who have got to listen to me, for I now have less to say.

Let me add my tribute to our administrators, to our High Commissioner and his predecessors, to our Colonial servants, and particularly, to our soldiers and the officers who have responsibility for them, whose problems I have chosen to study particularly. I was very glad to hear both right hon. Gentlemen pay well deserved tributes to them. I should also like to emphasise what the hon. Member for Keighley said, that in the next five months the difficulties of those out there in Palestine are going to be no less but far greater than they have been before. We in this House owe to them the duty of seeing that in this period we do not make their task one whit more difficult, one whit more dangerous.

I should like the Colonial Secretary to pass on to the War Office a suggestion I am going to make which affects our soldiers particularly. I believe that Palestine is no place for the very young National Service men at this moment. I understand that men of only four months'

54

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

73 M 2

Mr. Wyatt (Birmingham, Aston): Surely, the hon. Member is not suggesting that uncertainty in any way impaired the efficiency of the British elements in the Indian Civil Service?

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Mr. Low: I am suggesting that it made it much more difficult for them to work, because they were worried about their future. However well they did their work, I am certain, from what many of them have told me, that their anxiety about the future was very great, and must have resulted in taking their minds off matters which were much more important. I am now putting this to the Secretary of State as my view. Surely, we have enough experience of these matters now to make up our minds what should be done? Let us publish the terms which are to be offered by way of compensation, pension and so on. Do not let us go on bargaining to try to save the last pound. Let us be generous, as my right hon. Friend said, and, above all, certain.

Turning now to the United Nations aspect, I have always supported the United Nations and hold it as a gain that when one great Power draws out of Palestine, the vacuum of authority or power thus created is to be filled, not just by another great Power, but by the United Nations. However, at the moment the United Nations organisation has very little actual power; that is the trouble. One cannot remove authority from a place and leave nothing, that state of affairs will not last effectively for any length of time. This is the first time upon which the United Nations organisation has acted as such and taken over responsibility for a part of the world, and the sooner it is made clear that the Commission must arrive there with authority and power the better, because unless that is done we shall very soon see the end of an effective United Nations organisation.

I wish to refer to the way in which the United Nations organisation has handled this matter, because in some people's minds it is bound to create a precedent for the future. That is why this problem has always been so important, and is the significance of the pressure for votes mentioned by the hon. Member for Keighley, about which we have all heard; although we have no first-hand evidence, we can accept or not what we read and are told. That is why, too, I consider of the utmost importance the fact that the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine met the commander and two other representatives of the Irgun Zvai Leumi. If they did—and I

73 M 3

believe they did, because all the delegations other than the British delegation at the United Nations General Assembly received a memorandum to that effect, and apparently nobody denied it—then it seems to me that they did something utterly wrong; it is utterly wrong that the United Nations should send a Special Committee who have powers, or who take powers unto themselves, to talk to wanted men who have blood on their hands—because that is the position of those particular men.

I ask—I hope without embittering feelings, but this is a matter of importance at the present time—how it was that members of the United Nations Special Committee could go to Palestine and, in a moment, as it were, find out, not only the name of the commander, but where he lived, so that they could meet him; whereas we, who have been there for years, with all the security instruments and arrangements of a governing Power, are unable either to name the man or to produce his location at any time. That seems to me a most extraordinary thing. I know the difficulties. We have tried—and it is a credit to us—to obey the rules of ordinary government, and we have not arrested anybody without proof that he or she was responsible for a crime. It is a shocking thing that, on the first occasion when the United Nations actively enters into responsibility for a part of the world, they should make what I believe to be this most outrageous of mistakes, to put it no higher.

I pass to the Middle Eastern aspect of the whole problem. I was very glad to hear the Foreign Secretary say—I think in his first statement to the House as Foreign Secretary—that he treated the problem of Palestine as a Middle Eastern problem. I am sure that is right. I sometimes wonder how much it was treated as a Middle Eastern problem by the United Nations Assembly, who have perhaps less experience in these matters than statesmen in this country. If it was then right to treat Palestine as a Middle Eastern problem, it is still right, and will be so even when it is under the control of the United Nations Commission, and even when it is independent. I hope we shall have some statement from the Foreign Secretary on his future policy in this regard, but I will not detain the House in referring further to that aspect.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371 / 61797

like, then up get Members to say the decision is partisan and prejudiced. If the United Nations is ever going to work, it will be because people accept not only the things they like, but the things they do not like. Far the most important part of the Colonial Secretary's statement today was his acceptance of the United Nations decision. He set thereby an example of good U.N. behaviour. When a decision which is given is unpopular it must be accepted by the country most affected. I think it is highly discreditable for Members to try to explain away the overwhelming majority decision, with eight votes beyond the two-thirds majority as the result of American "pressure."

I went through the list of names of those who voted. There is one country in Europe which could have been pressed by America, and that is Greece. It could have been alleged that there was certain pressure there, but Greece voted against partition. Six Latin-American countries abstained, and one voted against partition. Where was the block which voted for partition? It was all the British Dominions, with the exception of Pakistan, and every European State, with the exception of that famous part of the American block, Yugoslavia, which abstained. Where are the signs of pressure? Were the French under American pressure, the Dutch or the Norwegians?

This is the most outrageous assertion to make, and it is being made by people who are not prepared to accept the basic principles of the United Nations, namely, that we have to accept things even if we do not like them, and loyally carry them out. The Government are to be congratulated for the unreserved way they have accepted the decision.

Mr. Lipson (Cheltenham): The hon. Member tells us that he was at Lake Success for three days. Can he give an assurance that during that time he saw no evidence that the United States were bringing any undue pressure?

Mr. Crossman: On the contrary, I was horrified to observe that the Latin-American States were being rather actively advised to abstain. Pressure in U.N.O. is not all one-sided, and we ought not to complain of pressure because we do not like a decision. It occurs with every decision.

73 M 5

Let us turn to the practical question of what we can do to help this decision. I do not think that we ought simply to consider getting out as fast as possible. We have to do that, but do not let us put our whole mind simply to getting the troops out. We have a serious responsibility in that area. Our policy depends greatly the success or failure of partition, for firstly we have a great influence on the Arab League. In fact, we created it and still sway its decisions. I hope that the Foreign Secretary will use all his influence. He went on record against partition. His personal view was opposed to it. He could, I think, go to the Arab League and say, "The peace of the world depends on U.N.O. I do not like this either, but we have to accept this if we believe in law and order." I hope that will be the attitude of British diplomacy in all its dealings with the Arab League. Secondly, we have quite special influence in Transjordan, which covers the whole Eastern frontier of Palestine. We can make certain that no illegal arms go through Transjordan to Palestine to either side. We can make sure that no "volunteers" from the Arab Legion go into Palestine. If they do go in, the rest of the world will rightly say, "If Transjordan soldiers volunteer for Palestine it is done with British consent." I hope that it will be part of the Government's policy that Transjordan remains really neutral.

There was one point that worried me in the Colonial Secretary's speech, and that was the suggestion that the U.N.O. Commission should come in late. I see the point that we cannot have a period of many weeks before the actual transference of sovereignty, but the presence of the U.N.O. Commission at the beginning seems to be essential if the idea of U.N.O. and the authority of U.N.O. is to be brought to bear in Palestine. That authority is the only thing today that stands between Palestine and civil war, confusion and disaster. Unless U.N.O. can make itself felt with something of real authority there is no hope for that country. I beg the Colonial Secretary to see that in every way the presence of U.N.O. is made real and effective in Palestine from the earliest possible date, and that the transfer takes place speedily and effectively.

Mr. Thomas Reid (Swindon): This part of the hon. Gentleman's speech is very important, but very nebulous. Can he

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Mr. Reid.]
tell us how our Government is to make U.N.O. effective? Does he mean that our Government is to put its Forces at the disposal of U.N.O.?

Mr. Crossman: I do not mean that. But if we were to give the impression that we were trying to keep the U.N.O. Commission out till the last moment, that would not be the best way of establishing its authority in Palestine. We want the secretariat set up there at once. We want some sign in Palestine of the activity of U.N.O. immediately if there is to be a successful transference of sovereignty to this unfortunate U.N.O. Commission.

The other thing that I would suggest as our policy is that we should still encourage the Russians and Americans in their attitude of stopping out. I think that one of the most short-sighted British complaints is that the Americans are not taking an active part in Palestine. If we bring the Americans politically and militarily into the Middle East there are certain things that inevitably will follow. The Middle East will become the battle ground between two great Powers. The only hope of the Middle East and of Palestine is that it becomes a political vacuum and that each of the two Powers will be content not actively to interfere on the understanding that the other will also refrain from interfering. I believe that we should not go on jeering at the Americans as though we wanted to see American soldiers in the Middle East, and a third world war brought appreciably nearer.

May I now say a word on the position of the Arabs and of the Jews. The main spring of Arab nationalism today is their hatred of imperialism, by which they mean being treated as puppets in the struggle for oil and the strategic jockeyings of the great Powers. What we want to see is that when we go out of Palestine these people are given a chance to live on their own, and to collaborate on reasonable terms with the West not as subjects, but as equals, and not with troops imposed as would be the case if we had Americans and Russians going into Palestine today. Of all the Westerners who have gone to the Middle East, there are only two groups who have done so with completely disinterested views. The first was the American missionaries who founded Beirut University, to whom the Arab nationalist movement owes a debt

of gratitude. They founded the universities for the Arabs and stimulated the Renaissance. The only other group of people who went with complete disinterest to the Middle East to build it up and develop it were the Jews. It is one of the tragedies of the Jews that they are associated in the Arab mind with Western Imperialism and hated as a symbol of the West. They are linked in the Arab mind with the British soldier, the oil magnate and all the other things which the Arab wants to be rid of. That is why I do not think that we want to urge American Armies to go into the Middle East.

If the Americans and Russians are not to send troops, where is to be found the armed force that will take the place of British soldiers? I entirely agree with the Colonial Secretary, and I think that it is our job to say, "If these five men of the U.N. Commission are sent out there with only a secretariat and no Armed Forces at their disposal, there is no reasonable chance of the partition being carried through successfully." I believe that if that view were expressed from all sides of the House, it might have some effect. It might make America and Russia realise that they must be prepared to agree to the proposal which was put forward by Guatemala, that an international police force should be sent to Palestine, composed exclusively of contingents from the middle and smaller Powers. I believe that is the only proposal with any prospect of success. Why was the U.N.S.C.O.P. Committee so successful? Because there was no great power on it. I believe that if from one of our Dominions, one of the Latin-American bloc, one of the Eastern bloc and one of the smaller European States contingents were sent to Palestine, they would really act as a deterrent, and prevent the spread of confusion from Palestine to the whole of the Middle East.

The importance of having a U.N.O. police force in Palestine, is to prevent rioting in Palestine spreading to the whole Middle East, and to prevent aggression from outside Palestine. A small symbolic force would deter States from around Palestine from acts of aggression which we have seriously to fear on the present plan. Such a police force is a practical proposal on one condition—that the

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Americans support it. As the hon. Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) knows better than I, you cannot have partition without enforcement. Nobody on the Peel Commission ever supposed that you could have partition by agreement. Now we have the U.N.O. proposal for partition but without the armed force essential for its imposition. Yet unless it is imposed, there is no chance of Jews and Arabs getting together after the two States are established.

I am not particularly alarmed about the rumours of Arab armies massing on the frontiers of Palestine. I am very alarmed by the impact of the U.N.O. decision on the Arab world. It has been an enormous shock to those peoples, and I do not think we ought to underestimate it. Particularly on this side of the House we ought not to oversimplify the situation by saying that, if the pashas and the effendi were not there, everything would be smooth. The real tragedy in the Arab world is that conciliation is far more possible to achieve with the pashas and the effendi. But if the volcanic forces now being held back ever get going, there would be the wildest xenophobia directed against the western world in which the Jews would be engulfed as well. That is what we are really concerned with when we are concerned with the effect of partition on the Arab world.

It is not the immediate question of rioting and guerilla armies; it is whether the relations of the whole Western world are not endangered by this conflict. British diplomacy has, alas, concentrated Arab attention to the Zionist issue. At meetings of the Arab League British representatives have been in attendance regularly, even when the most violent anti-Jewish actions were approved. We are now suffering the consequences of creating the Arab League on the basis of a single programme of denying a Jewish State to the Jews. So much for the Arabs.

As for the Jews I do not think they are celebrating in Palestine today. They know quite well the problem they are facing, but I have found a very dangerous tendency amongst Jews outside Palestine. I have heard Jews say, "We do not want an international police force in Palestine. Our boys can do it." That is the sort of irresponsible nonsense which every Jew and every friend of the Jews in this House should condemn. A field

cannot be ploughed if the ploughman has a musket in one hand, and oranges cannot be picked if the pickers have to carry hand grenades. If all the Jews in Palestine are going to be called up permanently to fight the Arab the economy of that country will break down. One of Dr. Weizmann's great sayings was, "We cannot be imperialist in Palestine since we are only 600,000 men, women and children and we cannot afford the loss of one of them because they are so valuable to us."

I would appeal to the House to realise that any incitement to the Jews of Palestine to "rely upon themselves" and their own military strength is completely disastrous to the national home. I believe that that is the message that we should send out from this House of Commons to the Jews—that they must not rely on the partition of Palestine by force or conquest, but by international sanction. U.N. must give them time to come to terms with the Arabs, for without Arab-Jewish conciliation there is no national home, and there cannot be a Jewish state unless the Jew and the Arab live peaceably together. The Jew has got to make the running in conciliation in the Middle East, because he is the one who is wiser, more civilised and more progressive.

I conclude by saying this. There are two great things which we have got to think about this afternoon and tomorrow. One is to ensure—and here the Colonial Secretary relieved my mind a great deal—that in every possible way we will facilitate the work of the U.N.O. Commission. I am completely confident that that is going to happen. We shall do it inside Palestine, and I hope it will also be our policy in the whole Middle East in our dealings with Transjordan and other Arab States. Secondly, we have got to persuade the Americans that they cannot hang back on this issue of the international police force. We can excuse them for not wanting to do anything themselves, but to prevent the formation of the only force which can possibly achieve the peaceful imposition of partition would turn into hypocrisy their continually expressed desire to help the Jewish cause.

6.5 p.m.

Mr. Lipson (Cheltenham): We have had this evening from the hon. Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) what

60 2

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

61

1253

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1254

[Mr. Lipson.]

we always expect from him, a very interesting speech on the problem of Palestine, but I cannot say that I found a good many of his arguments convincing from the practical point of view. He seemed very anxious, for instance, that America and Russia should not send their troops into Palestine. I think most people would say that, as the policy of partition which is now to be pursued in Palestine is their policy, they ought to be prepared to accept responsibility for implementing it. I do not believe for a moment that his alternative suggestion of an international police force representing the smaller Powers is likely to achieve the objects which he has in mind. We have had in Palestine 100,000 men for some time and we have found it impossible to maintain law and order there.

The passions that are being aroused by the decision to bring about partition in Palestine are at least felt as strongly by the Arabs as were those felt previously by the Jews and we must be prepared for a resistance from the Arabs as strong as we had to face from the Jews. Therefore, it is quite obvious that it should be a very strong force that should be sent there, if it is to achieve its object, and a strong force can only be provided by the United States of America and by Russia. I am not clear how long it is suggested that it will be necessary to impose partition by force, because the Arab opposition will be strong, and I believe it is a fallacy to think that it will not continue for a very long time.

Mr. Crossman: I was not suggesting a police force for maintaining law and order inside either Jewish or Arab State. That of course, must be left to the Jewish and Arab forces. It was as a sanction to prevent exterior pressure on Palestine.

Mr. Pickthorn (Cambridge University): Including immigration?

Mr. Lipson: The practical value of that proposal is, in my opinion, very little indeed. What will be required is some kind of authority which is strong enough to maintain law and order in Palestine, and, indeed, the hon. Gentleman confesses himself that the international police force will not do it. Personally I was very disturbed—and I speak as a strong supporter of the United Nations and realise what it means to the

future of the world—by the new version of “my country right or wrong,” which I thought was out of date. The hon. Member for East Coventry has now laid down the doctrine, “U.N.O. right or wrong.” If that doctrine is insisted upon, in my view, it will kill U.N.O., because we will never get the peoples of the world—and after all it is upon the support of the peoples of the world that U.N.O. depends—to support an institution if they see it time after time taking decisions which they believe are contrary to their conscience. Therefore, it is not being friendly to U.N.O. to suggest that we must accept whatever U.N.O. decides whether it is right or wrong.

Mr. Janner: What was the purpose for which U.N.O. was formed?

Mr. Lipson: I would say that the purpose of U.N.O. is primarily to maintain the peace of the world and that the peace of the world can only be maintained on a basis of justice.

I oppose the partition of Palestine because I believe it is unjust. Now that Great Britain has decided to lay down the Mandate which she has held for some 25 years, it is only right and proper that tribute should be paid not only to those who are responsible in Palestine today, but for what this country has made possible in Palestine during the period of the Mandate. When Britain accepted the Mandate in 1922 there were some 60,000 Jews there; today the number is nearly 700,000. What other country in the world has during that period made a comparable contribution to the problem of the homeless Jews seeking a home? During the period of the Mandate cities have developed and grown, colonies have been established, flourishing trade and industry have been built up and a Hebrew University established. All that has been possible under the terms and conditions under which Great Britain has held the Mandate.

Mr. Turner-Samuels (Gloucester): Through the efforts of the Jews.

Mr. Lipson: I do not deny the part the Jewish settlers have played, but some credit is due to the nation which made it possible for the Jews to go there. When Great Britain has been, to my mind, unfairly attacked and abused in recent years for what she has done or is supposed not

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

62

to have done in Palestine, it is just as well to remember these things.

I say unhesitatingly that Great Britain has no reason to be ashamed of the record of what she has made possible in Palestine during the past 25 years. The shame is upon those who have been able to benefit by what she has made possible and have not shown any appreciation for it. The pity of it is that all that has been accomplished in Palestine during the past 25 years is endangered by partition. The period of progress could have continued but who can doubt that partition inevitably means civil war in Palestine? We must face the fact that that means loss of life, the destruction of property, the creation of a barrier between Jew and Arab which it will be impossible to surmount, the creation of an irredentist movement and of a new plague spot in the world whenever there is any threat of war, and who can say how much of what has been done in Palestine in the last 25 years will survive all that?

That has happened because of the overweening ambition of Zionists engaged in a purely political gamble. They have sacrificed the substance of progress for the shadow of political power by the creation of a Jewish State. Today in various parts of the world Zionists are celebrating the establishment of a Jewish State. I would remind them of the words used by Prospero in "The Tempest":

"Praise in departing."

They should see how this policy develops and what the result is. Or they might also remember the words which the British statesman, Walpole, used when against his better judgment he was forced to agree that the long peace which had been maintained during his period of office should be broken and war should be declared upon Spain:

"They are ringing their bells now; they may be wringing their hands soon."

I believe that many thousands of Jews who are today celebrating the laying down of the Mandate by this country may very well before long come to pray that Great Britain had never left the country and that she were there to maintain law and order, life and security, for all.

I am not one of those who think that because the United States of America and Russia have agreed with regard to the partition of Palestine, it is necessarily right. What is wrong does not become

right because the United States and Russia agree about it. After all, it was always possible for us to come to terms with Hitler, and it has been possible for us at any time during the negotiations with Russia to agree as to the settlement of Europe and to the terms of a peace settlement with Germany; but we believed in regard to Hitler, and we believe in regard to the negotiations with Russia that we can only agree where we believe that agreement is right and just.

Therefore the test we should apply to the partition of Palestine is whether it is a just and right settlement. I am not convinced that it is. I cannot believe that the influence of U.N.O. in the world is likely to be strengthened by its decision about Palestine or by the manner in which that decision has been arrived at. It is no good pretending that there were not all kinds of intrigues and influences and that a tremendous amount of pressure was not brought to bear on States in order to bring about a settlement. I deplore that settlement because I believe that partition will bring to Palestine not peace but the sword, and for that reason I believe that it is no solution.

I am glad that the Government have decided that they will take no part whatever in trying to enforce partition. I am sure that in deciding that British Forces shall not be used for that purpose they have behind them the overwhelming support of public opinion in this country. I would go further and say that in view of what has happened in Palestine recently, it would be putting an intolerable and unfair strain on our troops to ask them to risk their lives to enforce the partition settlement. I urge that we should withdraw at the earliest possible date, and in particular we ought to withdraw without delay our soldiers who are under 21. It is really not fair to expose young and inexperienced soldiers to the conditions of service in Palestine at present, and even if it is difficult to withdraw the mass of troops, I hope that some effort will be made in regard to the younger ones.

I am concerned with what is likely to happen to the quarter of a million or more Jews who are living in Arab States. We have already had evidence of the physical danger to which they are exposed. They are innocent hostages and

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

63

1257

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1258

[Mr. Lipson.]

may become innocent victims, and I would ask His Majesty's Government to make friendly representations to the Governments concerned and point out what a matter of concern it would be to the people of this country if any harm should come to them. I know that a mob roused by political passions may be difficult to restrain, but I am sure that the Government would have the agreement of every hon. Member if they could make friendly representations and say to the Arab States that they should not stain the cause which many in this House and this country believe to be just by allowing mob violence of that kind.

I would like to pay a tribute to the very well-balanced and fair statement made by my right hon. Friend earlier this afternoon, and to ask him what exactly is to be the position with regard to immigration until we surrender the Mandate? Is immigration to be allowed to continue up to a certain point and if there is—I do not want to offend any hon. Members who may be Zionist by using the term "illegal immigration"—but if there is to be immigration over the quota before we surrender the Mandate, shall we try and prevent it or, because we are laying down the Mandate, shall we take no action at all?

I wish it were possible for me to share some of the rosy hopes that have been expressed with regard to the future of Palestine under partition, but I would not be honest if I were to say that I believe that as long as partition remains, they are likely to be realised. We have to face the facts, to understand the bitterness which has been aroused. I believe that Great Britain has done her part worthily in Palestine. She has made many sacrifices for that country but, whatever the future may hold for Palestine, we cannot accept responsibility for what follows the decision to bring about partition. The effects of that must be accepted by those who are responsible for making the decision.

6.22 p.m.

Mr. Warbey (Luton): The hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Lipson) always speaks with great sincerity, and I am sure that in the speech he has just made he was fully convinced of the genuineness and sincerity of what he was saying.

73 M 10

Nevertheless, I must confess I was shocked at the doctrine he seemed to enunciate. He was saying, in effect, that he preferred to set up his own individual judgment, or that this country, as a single nation, should set up its own national judgment against that of the international authority on which we are building our hopes for the future—the United Nations Organisation.

That seems to me to be the very doctrine which killed the League of Nations. It was when the leaders of this country, in the years between 1931 and 1939, were prepared to place the judgment of this country before the judgment of an international body, and were not prepared to use collective enforcement action, for example, against Japan; it was when we made our position clear on that point that we killed the League of Nations and the whole of the rule of international law and justice. Much as I would like to see the canons of abstract justice applied in every sphere of the world, before you can get justice applied you must have law, and until you have a rule of law in the world, there is no hope whatsoever of getting justice.

We are engaged in a tremendous struggle in this postwar generation, a tremendous effort to build up a world rule of law and, until we have done so, until we have built up a rule of law with the power of enforcement behind it, there is no hope of achieving justice in international relations. Therefore, I regard this decision of the United Nations Organisation as a test case for the world, and for this country in particular, of whether or not the United Nations is going forward to be a genuine and effective world organisation, or whether it is going the same way as the League. The duty of this country, since the United Nations General Assembly has taken its decision, is no longer simply its duty as a Mandatory Power. It has now a second and a greater duty. It has a duty as a member nation of the United Nations Organisation, and it is to that particular duty that I wish to direct attention this evening.

If we are to carry out our duty, there are certain things we must do. First, we should make it unequivocally clear that we will accept the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations, recalling that that decision was made not merely

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

by the United States and the U.S.S.R., but by more than the competent two-thirds majority required under the Charter of the United Nations organisation itself, and with the support of a considerable number of the smaller and medium Powers, including all four of the older British Dominions. Therefore, that decision has the full authority—not merely the legal authority of the Charter, but the moral authority—of the opinion of the leading nations of the world behind it. I was glad to hear the Colonial Secretary say that we accept loyally that decision of what he calls the international court of opinion, not merely as an expression of an opinion, but as a decision which we intend to carry out.

The second aspect of our duty is, so long as the Mandate lasts, so to operate our mandatory power as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly and of the Commission entrusted with carrying out its task. There I must say that I was rather disturbed at some of the statements made by the Colonial Secretary, because the resolution passed by the General Assembly lays down certain specific responsibilities to be carried out by the Mandatory Power. I would like to know more specifically from whoever replies for the Government which of those responsibilities we accept and are prepared to carry out, which of them we do not accept and are not prepared to carry out. If there are any which we are not prepared to carry out, as I gathered there were from the statement of the Colonial Secretary, can we be given precise and overwhelmingly important reasons why we cannot carry out the responsibilities specifically placed upon us?

Other hon. Members will no doubt refer to these matters in detail, but I want to refer to the general responsibility contained in Part I, B.12, of the recommendations, which says:

"The Mandatory Power shall co-operate with the Commission in the execution of its functions."

The Colonial Secretary, in his statement to the *ad hoc* Committee, and to the House this afternoon, said, in my opinion quite rightly, that we should not be prepared to accept sole responsibility for the enforcement of the United Nations decision. But, when Sir Alexander Cadogan was speaking to the Committee on 20th November, he said:

"The United Kingdom Government would not be prepared to transfer the authority of the Palestine Government to councils of government, or any other local representatives. . . . Such action would amount to participation in the implementation of a partition scheme. The United Kingdom Government would not participate in any scheme not acceptable to both Arabs and Jews."

I would like to know whether or not we are still standing by that statement of Sir Alexander Cadogan, because it seems to me that if we say we will not participate in a scheme we are getting very near to saying we will not co-operate with the bodies charged with carrying it out. I would like a specific statement that we are not still resting on that statement by Sir Alexander Cadogan.

A very important qualification was made by the Colonial Secretary in the statement he made to the *ad hoc* Committee on 26th September. This affects the question which has already been raised by my hon. Friend the Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman), namely, the question of collective enforcement action. The Colonial Secretary said:

"In considering any proposal to the effect that his Government should participate with others in the enforcement of a settlement, the Government would have to take into account both the inherent justice of the settlement and the extent to which force would be required to give effect to it."

It seems to me that here we need a very clear and explicit statement, and, before the end of this Debate, we should know whether or not the Government are prepared, not to take sole responsibility for enforcement action, not even to take the major role in enforcement action, but whether they are prepared to play their part as a member nation, and one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, in carrying out collective enforcement action.

Are we still resting upon those qualifications? Do we regard the settlement as so inherently unjust that we are not prepared to take part in collective enforcement? Do we regard the extent of the force required to carry it out as so great that we would not be prepared to participate in collective enforcement? I hope we shall have a clear statement on that question, and that before the end of this Debate it will be definitely said by the Government that we are prepared to uphold this decision of the United Nations

64

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

65

1261

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1262

[Mr. Warbey.]

organisation, along with other member nations by whatever means are necessary to uphold it.

Mr. M. Philips Price (Forest of Dean): Including military force?

Mr. Warbey: Oh, yes, I am not shirking that question at all. I mean quite explicitly that if it should prove as a result of the threats already made to oppose the decision by military force, that those threats should be carried out, quite clearly there is only one way in which this decision of the United Nations can be upheld, and that is by the use of military force in order to prevent that resistance. This is the very test of whether or not the United Nations organisation is going to mean anything more than the League of Nations did. This is the test whether or not the nations of the world, including this nation, are prepared to back up the decisions of the world assembly, if necessary by the use of force. That is the really vital question.

We have already seen that there is violence in Palestine, and that there have been threats of force from outside. We know the situation is critical; we know it is highly dangerous. Therefore, there is a strong possibility—I will put it no higher than that—that the Security Council, which is the competent organ of the United Nations in this matter, may have to take note of the existence of a threat to the peace, or even of a breach of the peace, and to decide what action is to be taken to enforce the decisions of the General Assembly. It is necessary to prepare in advance for this situation; it will be too late for action to be taken when the situation flares up.

Now is the time when the Security Council ought to be preparing for that situation, and now is the time when we, acting in our capacity as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, ought to be assisting that body to carry out its proper responsibilities. The Colonial Secretary has quite rightly told the *ad hoc* Committee, and the sub-committees time and again, that there was a weakness in their plan in regard to enforcement. The weakness exists, and it has been pointed out, but it is not enough for us now the decision has been taken to be content to sit back and point to

73 M 12

others. Now is the time for us to come forward to the Security Council and propose what should be done in order to enable the Security Council to carry out its responsibilities.

I hope no one will suggest that the Security Council has not the authority or power under the Charter to carry out those responsibilities. I hope no one will suggest that because the provisions of Article 43 have not yet led to anything, and because no agreements have been made for the use of national contingents in collective enforcement action, no action can be taken by the Security Council. The Security Council has the duty under Article 39 to,

“... determine the existence of any threat to the peace... or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42...”

Under Article 42 it is stated:

“Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate it may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.”

No reference is there made to Article 43, or to the agreements to be made under Article 43. There is no restriction on what type of land, sea or air forces may be employed. In other words, it would be perfectly competent for the Security Council under Article 42, and under Article 48, either to summon the member nations to provide forces for use to deal with the situation arising out of Palestine, or to set about establishing their own United Nations international armed forces.

That is the proposal which our Government should now table before the Security Council, that the Council should set about the task of creating a U.N.O. Force, if I may use the kind of cablese expression which seems to be fashionable in international terminology these days. We have had a U.N.S.C.O.P.; let us follow that up with a U.N.O. Force, an international armed force, preferably recruited from volunteers, under a commander-in-chief appointed by the Security Council, and instructed by the Military Staffs Committee, acting upon its behalf. This is the only way in which we can deal with the situation that may well arise in Palestine. A corporate force of this kind, used to enforce a corporate decision of

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

the United Nations, would avoid the obvious political difficulties of the employment in Palestine of the armed forces of any single nation. The creation of a U.N.O. Force would develop amongst its members a loyalty to the organisation as such which would be greater than the loyalty of forces under national command. The employment of such a force, and the character of such a force, would arouse a greater degree of respect amongst other nations of the world, and have a far greater prestige, and, therefore, influence and respect, than the forces of any single nation.

I believe that the Government of this country have now a great opportunity over this Palestine question. We have an opportunity to help to make the United Nations organisation begin to become something of a reality. We have an opportunity which may not exist again, if we now allow it to pass, not only to see that we set the example in upholding a collective international decision, even when we dislike some of its aspects. We also have the opportunity, out of this situation, to bring into being, through our initiative, the nucleus of a force which alone will make the United Nations organisation capable of becoming what we all hope to see it become in future—an organ of genuine world authority, capable of introducing an era of law and order, and, eventually, of justice.

6.44 p.m.

Mr. Pickthorn (Cambridge University): I think that on this occasion it is more difficult than on any earlier occasion I can remember to be sure that one has something to say that conceivably might do some good, and does not perceptibly run the risk of doing harm. Normally, when a Member has that feeling before rising to his feet, I am sure that he is well advised to refrain, and perhaps I should have been, but you, Mr. Speaker, will remember better than any one, how these Debates on Palestine first came to have the character which they now have. It may be remembered, though younger Members of the House can hardly know it, that there was a time when Debates on Palestine in this House were conducted—and this is not an exaggerated thing to say—wholly, almost 100 per cent., by Zionists and friends of Zionists, and it was action by one who was then a Private

Member which started something hardly to be called an organisation, but a collection of friends, who made it their business to try to see that other points of view were put, especially Arab arguments, even when they did not agree with them.

I have been intimately, if undistinguishedly and quite ineffectively, concerned with this business of Palestine and Zionism since I gave, or tried to give, advice to the Army Council in 1918, which, of course, the Army Council did not take. I have been particularly intimately concerned with the Debates in this House for the last 12 years. This is, I suppose, the last occasion upon which the House of Commons is to have a Palestine Debate, and, therefore, I found it almost impossible not to attempt to address the House.

There is, perhaps, one useful task which may be undertaken by one in my position. So far, I think that nobody has spoken from the point of view of a man who has thought that political Zionism was throughout wholly wrong, at least no one has specifically avowed that view. I have always held that view. I held it in 1918 when I saw something of the conception and gestation of the thing; I have held that view ever since. Even if what I say of a positive or practical nature has been said before, there is perhaps some slight importance in getting on to HANSARD's last pages of this kind confirmation of one or two things already said, from the point of view of a man who has had that conviction, or prejudice, or whatever one may choose to call it.

Almost the last words of the Colonial Secretary were "regret" and "relief." I think both words ill-chosen. I think "regret" far too small a word for the sadness of repentance which I think incumbent upon all of us, because this trouble is a trouble which, very largely, we have created. It is not like most of the great political and strategical troubles in the world, which were placed there by geography or an inscrutable Providence or by the history of our ancestors. This trouble is a trouble which has been made by us; there is no party point involved here, for all I have to say to the contrary one or two of the leaders of my party are concerned at least as much as the leaders of any other party, though I

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

67

1255

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1266

[Mr. Pickthorn.]

do think it fair to say, and I hope that hon. Members opposite will not think this excessively partisan, that the trouble was made quite gratuitously worse by the extreme uncriticalness with which the Socialist Party, in the years before they were in office, rushed into the most profuse promises of anything and everything which any political Zionist might want.

I say these things, not by way of congratulating myself on my wisdom when I was extremely immature and extremely ill-informed nor for the pleasure of reproaching those I always thought mistaken—I have no doubt that the people who take the opposite line will continue to believe that they were right and that misfortunes have undeservedly overtaken them—but for this reason: I believe we are led into an unnecessary and fatal mistake about this matter by calling it a problem, which gives a sort of subconscious notion that there is a solution somewhere. It is not a problem in the sense that all we have to do is to get hold of a teacher's book, where we will find the solution on one of the pages at the end. It is not a problem in that sense.

My belief is that we cannot begin to diminish the chance of continued suffering out of this matter, for others and for our country and countrymen, until we go back to the point at which we left what seems to me to be a defensible line. That was a long time ago. I think that one has only to state the proposition that the armed force of a great Power is to be used to compel a long-settled society to admit immigration, over whose quality and quantity it shall have no control, to see at once that it is really an untenable proposition, and that to try to maintain that proposition through a period when everyone is talking about democracy such as never was before, and a new epoch of superior law, order, justice, self-determination and all that—that that was a hopeless moral and intellectual paradox from the start. So here I think we should have much more than regret at the terrible situation in which we now find ourselves and in which we now see Palestine. And I think we should have much less than relief, which was the other word the Colonial Secretary used for his climax. Let us wait and see whether we are relieved by these decisions. It is too early yet, I think, to acclaim relief.

73 M 14

Sir, I have avowed those prejudices because I wish to come, if I may with all due modesty, to reinforce the plea that was put from the Front Opposition Bench, that now we have announced our decision to get out, we should get out quickly. I think that all the arguments used from the other side against that are false arguments and must land us in more and more trouble. While we were in Palestine, I myself and other friends of mine challenged the present Colonial Secretary and others—whichever side was in power we have done it; we have done it more than once—upon this point: that we have allowed the Jewish Agency to be built up into something which was far more than we had any authority to allow it to be built up into. As has been pointed out already today, we also allowed the Haganah to be built up, so that now there is in Palestine something which almost amounts to a state, more or less in control of something which almost amounts to an army. We have done that. Even if I am wrong in thinking that the whole conception was unpardonably mistaken from the beginning, we have done that ill, even upon the terms upon which we were there and upon the terms of the Mandate.

The Mandate also I have always regarded as largely bogus. I never forget that we were in Palestine for years before there was a Mandate. It is no use really referring the whole thing back always to the Mandate and saying that anything that comes within the Mandate must be right. Even taking it on the terms of the Mandate, we had no right so to govern that country that there would be formed by the immigrant section an alternative state inside the state and an alternative army inside the state.

Now here we are on the point of stepping out. I speak with some diffidence in the presence of the hon. Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman), who did not surprise me by the authority with which he told us all about what Zionists think and feel, but who did slightly surprise me by the equal omniscience which he had about Arab opinion and sentiment. Still, I venture to say this: that nothing anybody does or says now can possibly take out of Arab heads, and I think out of the heads of almost all of the East, the view that all the time we are staying there that is a help towards one side rather than the other side.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

That may be just or unjust. I am not arguing whether it is just or unjust. But I think that whatever be the view taken about the competence of U.N.O., whatever view be taken about the log rolling and whip cracking, and so on, at U.N.O., of which the hon. Gentleman told us (a) that there was none, and (b) that it was on both sides—whatever view be taken about these things, and about the decision to partition without consulting with those who had been against partitioning, a queer thing to do, something like a return to a long abandoned procedure of this House. I think I am right in saying that at an early stage in this House the rule was that if one voted against the Second Reading of a Bill one automatically disqualified oneself from being on the Committee. But this House, in its wisdom, long long ago saw the fallacy of that and abandoned it.

Whatever view be taken about the question whether this particular partition scheme is a good one—and I have not yet met anyone who does not think it a very bad one; whatever view be taken about the special competence of Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama and the Philippines, to put this difficult and unprecedented bit of business through; whatever view be taken about those things, I do not think anyone can doubt that the longer we hold soldiers and authority in Palestine, the more it will be felt by the Arabs that we are thereby assisting this partition scheme. If only for that reason—

Mr. Benn Levy (Eton and Slough): Did the hon. Member say "by the Arabs" or "by the Jews"?

Mr. Pickthorn: I said "by the Arabs." If only for that reason, though I think that there are many others, I think, therefore, that we ought to get out at once. I say this to the Treasury Bench. I do not know who is going to wind up. Really they are treating the House, I think, unfairly unless they give us far more details than they have given so far about how the thing is to be done. We really know no more now, almost, than we did when we came in this morning. Certainly we were told nothing in the right hon. Gentleman's speech that he could not have printed yesterday so as to give us some opportunity of criticising and asking him to fill in the gaps. Certainly we ought to have answers about

property from Palestine, as was mentioned by the hon. Member for East Coventry, and why contracts were not stopped for spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on aerodromes and barracks, and so on. We ought to have exact details about those things.

One other thing I want to say and then I will sit down. It is about immigration. There was rather an assumption in an earlier interchange that, of course, all the Zionists—if they are Zionists, and my own belief is that many of them are very conscript Zionists—in Cyprus, at any rate, ought to be decanted back into Palestine. Is that right? I think that we ought to get out well before May if we possibly can, and certainly before August. But, however long it is to be, are we to put all these back? What other immigration are we to allow? When we get out, what is our understanding of what U.N.O. intends? Are the Arabs to be allowed to permit quite unrestricted immigration into their territory of Arabs, non-Arabs and anyone they choose? Are the Zionists to permit quite unrestricted immigration in their territory in the intermediate period before they are really independent powers, while they have still a U.N.O. Commission brooding over them? Are they to be permitted to have any amount of immigration they like from wherever they like?

These are the most important questions of all. I think that the House has proper cause for complaint that we did not have these questions explained to us at all in the opening speech. I hope that the House, at any rate tonight, will be told something about these questions so that there will be a chance of discussing them tomorrow. My last word of all is that I do beg the right hon. Gentleman opposite to believe that the thing being where the thing now is—and I would not for worlds say a word to exacerbate anyone's feeling in this situation—the thing being where it now is, it having been declared to be our policy to get out, for heaven's sake let them expedite the getting out.

7.0 p.m.

Lieut.-Colonel Harry Morris (Sheffield, Central): Any excuse which I needed to offer a comparatively rare contribution to one of these Debates is in the speech by the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Lipson). On the very first occasion on which I had the privilege of addressing this House I thought it desirable to offer

68

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

69

1269

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1270

[Lieut.-Colonel Morris.]

a few strictures to the hon. Gentleman. It is a pity he is not here now. I did point out to him at that time, or I suggested the possibility, that his honourable father might be turning in his grave when the hon. Member made his speech. Perhaps I might say now of the hon. Member, even in his absence, that I heard him refer to his Zionist friends. May I suggest that he has no Zionist friends.

I had hoped that when the Colonial Secretary opened this Debate he would tell us something about the mechanics of this project. He did tell us, and I expected him to tell us, what Britain's attitude would be. He told us that now at long last the Government were prepared unequivocally to support the decision of the United Nations organisation. He did tell us that, having asked for advice from the United Nations organisation, it was not our duty to shape it. It seems to me we are going to be brought to the view that the only way for the world at large to be able to content the United States and Soviet Russia is for Britain to keep quiet. That seems an astonishing situation. However that may be, if that is right, and it was not our duty to offer any advice to the United Nations organisation, how was it that we chose this particular moment to say we were going to get out of Palestine and to say that we were going to give up the Mandate? Why was it considered desirable for Sir Alan Cunningham, the High Commissioner, to send for the leader of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and tell him what Great Britain proposed to do and for him to state that that would bring about a state of chaos, anarchy and bloodshed. One explanation was that it might have been intimidation. If that is too harsh a word, why was it that Great Britain chose that particular moment, if no attempt was being made to shape the decision of the United Nations organisation. Why was it that Great Britain said, just when the United Nations organisation was considering the problem: "We are going to get out of Palestine"?

The Colonial Secretary says we are not prepared to enforce a settlement which is not acceptable to the Jews or the Arabs. Although the hon. Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Pickthorn) says this is not a problem in the sense that we can find a

very easy solution of it, it was the Foreign Secretary, the House will remember, who said he was prepared to stake his political reputation on the solution of this problem. Perhaps he treated the problem lightly. Perhaps he treated his political reputation lightly. Perhaps a little of both. Was not the reason that Great Britain referred the problem to the United Nations organisation because Great Britain could not find a solution acceptable to both Jews and Arabs? If that is right, it ill becomes Great Britain now to say "We are not now going to accept the decision of the United Nations organisation, because it is not acceptable to Jews and Arabs." A greater inconsistency and paradox does not seem to be possible.

I do not propose to argue with the hon. Member for Cheltenham as to whether partition is or is not a good settlement. He seems to have no enthusiasm for it. He may be surprised to hear that I, as a Zionist, have no enthusiasm for the partition. I agree with the right hon. Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) when he says that what we are seeking to do today is not what we had hoped to do. It is not the solution visualised by Lord Balfour, or by Mr. Lloyd George. It is not the solution which would have been visualised by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition if he had been here today, and it is not the solution visualised by Zionists.

I would remind the hon. Member for Cambridge University that it is just about 30 years ago to the day that I also was in Palestine. I was in Palestine following the designing of the Balfour Declaration. I had good reason to know what negotiations were going on in Palestine and what it was intended to give the Jews. The Jewish National Home is not the little bit proposed to be given to them now but the whole geographical and political entity of Palestine as it was known at that time. That was the arrangement and the result of the negotiations going on between Jews and Arabs at that particular time. It cannot be pretended today by anyone—no matter on which side of the fence he happens to sit—that anyone is going to scream with enthusiasm about the suggestion that the United Nations organisation has made. But the United Nations has come to a decision by an overwhelming majority

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

and it is plain poppycock to talk about any improper pressure by the Jews. I do not know where this pressure is alleged to come from. This myth of Jewish pressure, this sinister influence which the Jews are supposed to be able to bring about, does not appear to have been explained. It does not appear to occur to anyone who holds that view that if there were such an influence there would have been no Hitler and we would not be discussing these problems today.

The decision of the United Nations organisation was completely and utterly overwhelming. They came to that decision not because they thought it was an ideal solution, but because they thought it was the only practical solution. I put it to the Government today that, having passed the problem to the United Nations organisation, and a decision having been made, it is not for us to sit in the corner like a sulky boy and say that we are not going to play. I agree with the Colonial Secretary when he says that the enforcement of this decision must not be by us alone. He is entitled to say that and I think that Zionists will agree. But he is not entitled to say, and Great Britain is not entitled to say: "We will take no part in the enforcement of this decision." After all, we are a constituent member of the United Nations organisation. So far as I know, our foreign policy is based on the United Nations organisation and if we do not take part in the decision, then we do not accept it.

What is the point of having an organisation at all, if the minority refused to accept it. We set it up, and we are part of it, and we are bound to accept its decisions. We are bound to do what we can to implement them. If that is right, and I firmly believe it to be right, I absolutely agree with what has been said from both sides of the House that the matter cannot be left just there. It is not sufficient for Great Britain to say that we are going to get out of Palestine as quickly as possible. That will not do. Great Britain cannot just walk out of Palestine and leave it, in the words of the High Commissioner of Palestine, in a state of "chaos, anarchy and bloodshed." We must hand over to some organisation, no matter how constituted. Great Britain cannot go out of the country with relief that we have been able to hand over the job and let somebody else do it.

73 M 17

That is not statesmanship. It seems to me to be the negation of statesmanship.

I want to know, and I think everybody who is interested in this problem is entitled to know, what is to be the position of the Government now? Great Britain says "We are coming out at a particular date." What is going to happen in the meantime? The Colonial Secretary says that it is the responsibility of the Mandatory Power to maintain law and order. I hope the Mandatory Power will do just that. I hope that whoever winds up this Debate will tell us what is going to happen with regard to the whole of the problems of Palestine. What about the administration of Palestine, carrying on the public services, what about Palestine being allowed to continue as a going concern as a social, political and economic entity? Great Britain cannot just walk out and say "We are going, and we do not care very much what happens." That just will not do.

I have always believed, and I am sure the right hon. Member for West Bristol would support me in this, that a Mandate works out something like this. The Mandatory Power, when it came to the conclusion that the inhabitants of the country for which it held a Mandate had reached that stage of social and economic evolution as to be able to stand on its own feet, would walk out. Does Great Britain believe that that is the situation in Palestine? I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, to see that you are exhibiting some impatience, and I am sorry I have spoken so long, but, as the hon. Member who spoke last said, this may be the last occasion on which we may be able to discuss Palestine at all.

7.12 p.m.

Major Legge-Bourke (Isle of Ely): I do not think I can recollect any day, either in my Army career or in my short life in this House, when I found it more difficult to make up my mind as to what is right than on this occasion. I fully endorse what my hon. Friend the senior Burgess for Cambridge University (Mr. Pickthorn) said when he declared that it would be wrong to say anything in this Debate which one felt was likely to lead to greater harm than has already been done, and that remark has caused me a great deal of thought. Therefore, I feel very hesitant about saying what I propose to say.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Major Legge-Bourke.]

First, I must tell the House that I reject this plan completely, because I believe that it will lead inevitably to world war. I believe that partition cannot work in Palestine, and I believe that, if we have a problem which is very grave and apparently insoluble, it is no use dividing it into two, so that in each part we reproduce the same problem. I feel that I should tell the House the reasons which lie behind my decision. I believe that the main principle which matters in this world from the democratic point of view, is that we do not achieve prosperity until we have established peace, and that we do not achieve peace until we have established justice. I maintain that there are three incidents in the whole of the Palestine picture and in the history of our rule in Palestine for which there is no justification whatever.

The first was the Balfour Declaration. I maintain that that cannot be found to be just in any way, and it was made clear by Mr. Landman, one of the younger Zionists, who, at Dr. Weizmann's request, was transferred from M.I. 9 in 1918, that the price of American aid at the end of the first war was considered to be an effort to secure Palestine for the Jews, and he emphasised that the new Jewish leaders were anxious lest a Jewish Palestine should affect their civic rights here in this country, and that they were also generally concerned for the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. The second injustice to me is that the Mandate for Palestine conflicted with Clause 4 of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and was therefore unjust to the Arab population. The third injustice is the subsequent action in implementing the Balfour Declaration without the Arabs having either agreed about immigration or as to the Mandatory Power, and I maintain that that injustice has simply served to exacerbate any rivalry or jealousy which may have been in existence between Jew and Arab at the time of the Mandate.

These conclusions on the subject of these injustices are the three premises which I have in mind when approaching the problems which we are discussing today, and I would now like to try to apply the principle which I mentioned at the beginning, when I said that a solution which had to be just must also promote peace. The U.N.O. proposal splits Palestine into two. I am quite convinced that

the inevitable result of that is world war. I think it is only right, however, that, if I criticise and challenge this U.N.O. scheme, I should at least try to provide an alternative, and that is, of course, the hardest task of all today. Before I put forward my views and suggestions, I want to say a few words about Zionism. On page 11 of the Report of the General Assembly, paragraph 9, these words appear:

"In physical resources . . . Palestine is extremely poor, having neither coal, iron, nor any other important mineral deposits. Indeed, the only considerable non-agricultural resources are the potassium and sodium salts which are extracted from the Dead Sea."

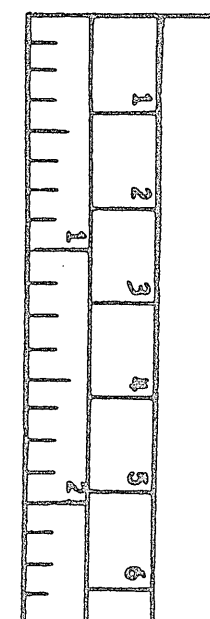
Then it goes on:

"Oil, on which some people have set hopes, has not been discovered in payable quantities, though tests are proceeding in the South."

I maintain that that statement is fundamentally incorrect. The resources of the Dead Sea are enormous, but at the same time they are themselves but a small part of the total resources, most of which are underground. The largest of these underground resources are potash and oil, but there are other resources in Palestine, including gold in solution in the Dead Sea which has been valued at between £10,000,000,000 and £5,000,000,000, and the magnesium chloride, which was estimated by the Crown Agents for the Colonies in 1925 to amount to 22,000 million tons. As long ago as 1864, it was suggested to the Turks that potash could be produced in the Dead Sea, and I mention the date of that because I think it is important that it preceded by 39 years the first Zionist Congress of 1897. Since then, various Zionists have commented on future economic prospects, and, in a report of a meeting addressed by Mr. Ettinger on 29th May to the Zionist Federation of Sydney, Australia, Mr. Ettinger is reported to have said this, referring to the Novomeysky concession which since has become the Palestine Potash Company:

"Had we lost this concession, our whole future in Palestine might have been in danger. All these matters are of an economic nature, but it is in this sphere that our political work is most important."

A year before that, the late Lord Melchett, addressing a conference of Zionists and non-Zionists at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, on 20th October, 1928, said, in urging non-Zionists Jews to join the Zionist movement:



COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
Reference: FO 371/61797

"Let me tell you, you cannot afford to wait. While we are discussing, other people are acting. Whereas we have reports as to the possibilities in Palestine, Gentiles are acquiring land and beginning to take possession of all the best things in the country If we do not get together and do something within the next five years, the opportunities may be so slight, and the ideal we have set before us in Palestine may never be realised. I am not troubling about the economic development of Palestine. That is assured. The problem is who will do it."

A debate took place in another place on 20th March, 1929, in which Lord Melchett did his best to discourage unwary investors from thinking that there was a golden fortune in the Dead Sea potash. It is, perhaps, naturally difficult for hon. Members of this House who are also Zionists to avoid it, but, throughout the history of this movement, there has been a tendency towards what I might call "political schizophrenia," which is borne out by the two quotations which I have given. The concession was granted on 1st January, 1930, to Mr. Novomeysky. Sir John Hope Simpson, in his Report of 30th October, Command 3686, page 117, said:

"If the Dead Sea concession proves to be a successful venture, it is impossible to forecast the magnitude to which the chemical industry arising therefrom may expand."

It is obviously true that the idea of a National Home has appealed to the less-informed Jews, but the interests of political Zionism have other aims in view. In his book, "The Jew in Revolt" W. Zuckermann said:

"A Jew can do nothing but follow the road shown by the Soviet Union. There is no other way for him. As a Jew he must join the army, fighting for the social revolution, or perish. . . . Spiritually, the social revolutionary movement is saving the Jews for the world."

I do not suggest that all Jews automatically agree with that, but I submit that the inspiration of political Zionism is similar to that which lay behind Bolshevism in 1918. The Netherlands Minister when in Petrograd on 6th September, 1918, and as reported in Letter No. 6, Command Paper 8, which was the White Paper entitled "Russia, No. 1, 1919," said:

"I consider that the immediate suppression of Bolshevism is the greatest issue now before the world, not even excluding the war which is still raging, and unless, as above stated, Bolshevism is nipped in the bud immediately, it is bound to spread in one form or another over Europe and the whole world, as it is

organised and worked by Jews who have no nationality and whose one object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things."

I submit that the aim of people who finance Zionists is to get control of the economic resources of Palestine which have been deliberately kept out of the public eye. I hope it will be realised that there is a far bigger issue in this than a mere war between Arabs and Jews. It is an economic war, and power politics of the very worst sort.

I would commend to the House the oral evidence given by the Communist Party of Palestine to the representatives of U.N.O. on 13th July this year. I am not going to read it to the House, but hon. Members will find it on page 145 of Annex A, Vol. 3, of Supplement No. 11 of the Official Record of the second session of the General Assembly. I suggest that they should compare it with Dr. Weizmann's remarks on page 78 of that report and with Mr. Preminger's remarks on pages 235 and 237. I believe that once Arabs and Jews are left to the mercies of an unsupported Commission, as is, apparently to be the case, "the big show" will start to develop. If this proposal of U.N.O. goes forward, and we acquiesce, we shall have sown the seeds for the next world war, and the harvest may be far earlier than we expect, and may produce a bumper crop.

How, then, is peace to be maintained? I maintain that partition is an impossible way. The only way it might work—and even then I think it is remote—is when it is enforced. Partition multiplies by at least two the present troubles, however forcibly it is imposed. I recommend that His Majesty's Government should, before it is too late, go back to U.N.O., and say that this country cannot possibly agree with its decision.

I suggest that His Majesty's Government should propose a three months' moratorium, announcing that, at the end of that time, they are prepared to meet both sides in Palestine, or all the Jewish and Arab representatives throughout the world. If at the end of that three months' period nothing has transpired, and neither side has come forward and agreed to meet, Great Britain should herself impose the following. A provisional elected government of Arabs and Jews in the relation of two-thirds to one-third, excluding all those on both sides who have

72

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Major Legge-Bourke.]

bad criminal records behind them; maintaining law and order by giving at long last the British Army a completely free hand. I would then suggest that the Palestine Police Force which, apparently, is already moving in the right direction, should gradually have its British element thinned out, as has been done in the Egyptian Police, and that the Defence Force of Arabs and Jews should be gradually Palestinised, as the Indian Army was Indianised. We should set then a provisional period of nine years in which to complete this process, allowing three three-year elected assemblies in that time.

I do not think that anybody more than I hoped that U.N.O. would be a success, and would unite the world in a just peace. Therefore, I feel it all the more bitterly that, in the first real testing which U.N.O. has had, it should, apparently, have shown itself quite incapable of discerning where true justice lay. Justice is more important than the judges, even if the judges happen to be the United Nations. Because I believe that, I cannot accept this proposal, which I can foresee resulting in mass bloodshed. It does not matter whether that blood be Jewish, Arab or British. Some will inevitably be shed. Let us see, at all costs, that the blood shed is as little as possible, and that what has to be shed is shed in the cause of justice, and not in the perpetuation of yet another unjust blunder which gives the final shove to the tottering foundations of peace. If and when His Majesty's Government accept what I propose, and recommend it to U.N.O., I believe that, when the time comes for setting up the joint state, the only way to do it will be, in the words of the Duke of Milan in the last scene of the "Two Gentlemen of Verona":

“ Know then, I here forget all former griefs,
Cancel all grudge, repeal thee home again,
Plead a new state in thy unrivall'd merit,
To which I thus subscribe.”

7.30 p.m.

Mr. Janner (Leicester, West): I am bound to say that I listened to the remarks of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke) with real consternation. I could not understand for the life of me why he should introduce what seemed to be perfectly irrelevant matter unless he intended to say that we should not have accepted the United Nations organisation's findings

and that if we go to arbitration to U.N.O. at any time we should accept that arbitration only if it is in our favour.

Major Legge-Bourke: May I ask the hon. Gentleman whether he does not think it would have a very disturbing effect on U.N.O. if we were to go back and say we could not accept U.N.O.'s decision and that they should reconsider the whole matter?

Mr. Janner: That is precisely what I mean. Of course, we cannot turn down the U.N.O. decision; of course, we have to proceed with it and to take our share as Members who have signed the Charter which calls upon its members to take a proper share in fulfilling a decision. With due respect, I suggest my hon. and gallant Friend is trying to draw red herrings across the track in relation to the real position, and I am sorry he has taken that course because it had been my intention to deal only with the immediate problems before us. But his speech and those of several Members who have spoken this afternoon prompt me to answer points they have raised. What was the Balfour Declaration? Was not the Balfour Declaration given to Lord Rothschild the president of the Zionist Federation in this country to hand over to them? Nobody misunderstood the matter at all. Everybody knew very well that the Balfour Declaration was an important step further in the development of the objects of Zionism. Balfour declared himself a Zionist. Lloyd George declared himself a Zionist and the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition has always regarded himself as a Zionist.

If there is a suggestion that there is a difference between political Zionism and any other kind of Zionism that is obviously wrong, because Balfour knew, and we knew in this country, and everybody concerned with the Balfour Declaration knew, what Herzl had propounded, and the result was that the declaration was a Zionist declaration and everyone knew just exactly what it meant. Then an hon. Member complained that several years transpired after that before the Mandate was accepted and he used this argument as a cause to complain. What happened was this: The League of Nations most carefully and minutely considered the terms of the Mandate and unanimously—52 nations—after years of study,

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

decided to implement the Balfour Declaration by producing the Mandate, and in addition to that America, who was not a member of the League, also gave her seal to this decision.

What my hon. Friends overlook is the following important fact. The Jewish people were a party to that transaction and after some 25 to 30 years—of dragging out of the soil of Palestine something which is the wonder of the world, you cannot turn round to the settlers—neither my hon. and gallant Friend, nor any of his colleagues—to these men and women, many of whom are successors of those who fell and died in the swamps, to make Palestine a fruitful land and say, “ You have no say in the matter. We are now going to try something else.” The truth of the matter is this—that the test of the League of Nations was the mandate system. The mandate for Palestine was one of the few successful ventures that emanated from the League of Nations. What my hon. and gallant Friend does not understand again is this: that the free Arab States that today are admitted into the United Nations organisation—Syria, Iraq, Saudi-Arabia and the Lebanon—were all created under Mandates given by precisely the same League of Nations that introduced the Palestinian Mandate. Turkey, which before the Great War had them in its power, and was a very hard taskmaster indeed, would have retained these countries and retained them in the parlous state in which they were then; unfortunately, most of them are in that condition at the present time in consequence of the fact that they are being neglected.

What my hon. and gallant Friend and his colleagues should do is this: instead of adopting the dog-in-the-manger policy with regard to the Jewish State, why do not they go and encourage the freed Arab States to develop the culture and education that lies within their power. Instead of encouraging the ex-Mufti—there you have one of the biggest traitors that has ever crossed the scene and who to-day—*[Interruption]*—he is the person to whom everyone today in the Arab Higher Committee in Palestine looks for guidance. *[An HON. MEMBER: “Nothing of the sort.”]* Oh yes, indeed. Everyone knows that they came together in Beirut and discussed matters under his chairmanship. He is the chairman of that

committee. He is a traitor to this country and to the Allies. The Arab Higher Executive Committee take their instruction from him.

I do not want to go further into these points because I believe we have reached a stage when it is essential to deal with matters that are declared to be right by the United Nations organisation. May I say how ridiculous it is for anyone to suggest that he knows the situation better than the United Nations organisation after the exhaustive inquiries that have taken place? What is the United Nations organisation for? This matter was submitted by us to the United Nations organisation. We said that this constituted an independent inquiry. When the result is a report which declares that partition is to be put into effect there is a clamour by some Members. They say, "We will not accept the United Nations organisation report. We want to enter into these arbitration proceedings on the understanding that the result must conform to our point of view." As U.N.O., in their wisdom, have discovered that the right thing to do here is to create a Jewish State, of course that does not fit in with their book.

What has the United Nations organisation said, after examining the situation fully and thoroughly? They have formed two or three conclusions of importance that I want to refer to. First of all, they tore to shreds the 1939 White Paper. Then they said the Jewish people have a right to settle in Palestine and they are fit to run a State there. A number of arguments have taken place in this House and elsewhere on academic grounds as to whether Balfour or Lloyd George meant the formation of a State or a Mandate when they gave the Declaration. Sufficient has been said, I think, to fill many volumes. But the truth of the matter is that U.N.O. says that this is what the Mandate means. That is the answer of U.N.O., an independent body, and then my friends say that U.N.O. were coerced. I am bound to say that if someone had the temerity to approach Mr. Pearson of Canada or Mr. Evatt of Australia and suggest that someone had coerced them into coming to this conclusion, I am inclined to think they would not take too kindly to the suggestion, nor would New Zealand's representative. But what is more interesting

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

[Mr. Janner.]

is this: Field-Marshal Smuts, who participated in producing the Balfour Declaration and in the production of the Mandate has frequently reaffirmed, and his country has reaffirmed, the right of the Jewish people to have a State in Palestine.

I deviate for a moment to answer a question raised about the products of the Dead Sea. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman looks at the map—I have it here—he will find that his anxiety will be removed. What astonished me was that a person of the Jewish religion could speak in this House in the manner in which the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Lipson) spoke. He desires to have large immigration into Palestine. If it had not been for Zionism there would not have been, in Palestine, opportunities for more than a trickle of Jewish immigration. The hon. Member wanted the ha'penny and the bun. He cannot have both.

He has an entirely wrong view of the situation. If he will refer to the U.N.O. Report, he will there see what is the right attitude to take. What did America, Russia, and four of our Dominions say? They said in effect that to call immigration into Palestine illegal—if it is a question of 150,000 within two years and more afterwards—is wrong. Do not let us forget that they concluded that Jewish Palestine should be open to Jewish immigration. Those who hold a different point of view have brought us to a terrible condition as a consequence of their refusal to accept the conclusions which the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations arrived at on the White Paper of 1939. We have ignored what the Mandates Commission said; they said, in effect, by a majority of four to three, that it was illegal and immoral to prevent the immigration of Jews into the Jewish National Home. How many lives might have been saved if their view and now U.N.O.'s had been accepted. It is all very well to shed tears, as the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) asks us to do, for those German prisoners of war who survived in Germany and elsewhere. Why does he not occasionally think of those who were killed, and what might have happened if the doors of Palestine had been opened to them? What harm would have been effaced by doing that?

73 M 22

Mr. Stokes: Would that not also apply if we had opened our doors?

Mr. Janner: It is no good talking in hypothetical terms. What is the good of the hon. Member putting forward theories in the practicability of which he does not believe? The Jewish people in Palestine were prepared to take these people. They did not quibble about whether any work was available for these hapless creatures; they did not quibble about whether there was sufficient food for them. The people in Palestine would have taken them even if they had arrived naked, rather than that they should be destroyed in the gas chambers of Germany. Many could have escaped. Has their war record been such a bad one for Britain? Why are there such large stores in Palestine? Could these stores have been safely left in any other part of the Middle East? Why did our troops go to Jewish Palestine in the war? Was it because Egypt was anxious to help us, or the Mufti, or Iraq, or Syria? No. It was because Jewish men and women, the Haganah, who have been referred to with such contempt from time to time, were in the vanguard of the attacks against the enemies of the Allies. Although it was a case of the mouse and the lion, the mouse, nevertheless, helped to extricate the Allied lion from the meshes of the net.

I am not surprised that Australians and New Zealanders were prepared to take the line they have taken at U.N.O. Many were in Jewish Palestine during the war, where they were well looked after and happy. It was the only reliable and safe place in the whole of the Middle East for such troops to be in. What other Ally of the last war has been repaid by the type of argument and hostile statements that we have heard in this House from some Members? Why do not Members look at this matter from a realistic standpoint? I have taken the trouble to work out the exact area of land of the New State of which we are talking. It is 5,469 square miles. Transjordan has gone; half Palestine has gone. It is not even the size of one of the larger counties in England. What is all the fuss and bother about? Does anyone think that the effort of the Yishub, in setting an example to the rest of the world, is not worth at least the holding of a portion of land that size? The suggestion that the Arab worker in Palestine is left alone against the Jewish

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

worker there is nonsense. The agitation is coming from without.

I have a number of questions which I would like to ask the Government. Is it true that the Palestine Government have refused to provide arms to the Jewish Civil Guard while, at the same time, supplying arms to the Arab Civil Guard? If so, why? Are the Jewish people there to be destroyed, because they are not given the arms with which to defend themselves? The Minister knows very well that there is no attack commenced by the Jews on Arabs. I would like to ask him about immigration. When will a port with an adequate hinterland be evacuated to enable immigration to go on in accordance with the special decisions of U.N.O.? Does my right hon. Friend realise that the Arab agitation and disturbances are being encouraged, by the fact that although Jewish quarters and Jewish transport have been attacked the Jews are not permitted to defend themselves? Why? No one wants to see any British Tommy doing it. There are 30,000 Jews—perhaps 2,000 or 3,000 were killed in the war—still in Palestine. Why not let them defend themselves? I suggest that adequate liaison should be provided between the Palestine Government and the Jewish community of Palestine for the planning of the British evacuation. Why not? Who will suffer by it?

Why have members of the Haganah been arrested for carrying arms defending Jews against Arab attacks? How can they defend themselves if they have no arms? The Minister knows that all the talk about Irgun Zvai Leumi has nothing to do with the authorised movement, that they were as big a menace to the Haganah, even a bigger menace, than to anybody else. How many Arabs have been arrested? More Jews than Arabs have been killed. Has even one Arab been arrested?

In conclusion, I would like to make an appeal to the Arabs. I have no desire to create discord between Jew and Arab in Palestine. On the contrary, I want to see them working in the fields together, enjoying the cultural activities of the country together. When the Jewish people built the Hebrew University in Jerusalem the first thing they did was to found an Arab research depart-

ment. Everybody in the Jewish community wants to live in harmony with the Arabs in Palestine. It is my honest belief that there will be an opportunity for them to do this so long as we do not adopt the kind of publicity which we have adopted in the past. We in Britain have irritated and aggravated the situation by the wrong type of publicity.

We could tell the Arabs, "It is in your interests to live peaceably with the Jews." Why not? Is it not in their interests? Have they not prospered during the period of the Mandate? Has not disease diminished, has not infantile mortality gone down? Is there not a different standard of living in Palestine, for example, from what there is in Transjordan? Why not let us adopt a publicity campaign, through His Majesty's Government, which will emphasise that it is in the best interests of the Arabs as well as of Jews that this U.N.O. decision should be honoured? I believe that if we did that properly we would remove the hostilities which are being fanned into flames against the wish of the residents of Palestine.

7.51 p.m.

Mr. Stokes (Ipswich): The argument to which we have just listened contained so many fallacies that I have not time to deal with them all. I will take up one or two. The hon. Member for West Leicester (Mr. Janner) complained that whilst the Arabs were armed to the teeth, the poor Jews had been disarmed. Of course, that is absolutely untrue, as anybody is well aware who knows anything about the situation in Palestine. I well remember during the war the complaints there were about raiding Arab fortresses while the Jews were to be left alone. Secondly, my hon. Friend went on to argue—the point has been really argued to death—that we are concerned with only such a little bit of Arabia that we need not bother about it. Never let us forget that the Arabs base their claim upon Palestine upon promises that were made long before the Balfour Declaration.

I want to take up the point about the Balfour Declaration. I have often wondered how the Balfour Declaration originated. I have managed to get a copy of the original letter which Lord Rothschild wrote to Mr. Balfour. I will read two extracts from it to the House. I will not read the whole letter because that would

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Mr. Stokes.]

take too long. The letter is dated 18th July, 1917; and it is written from 148, Piccadilly, London, W.1. It is as follows:

" DEAR MR. BALFOUR,

At last I am able to send you the formula you asked for. If His Majesty's Government will send me a message in line with this formula and they and you approve it, I will hand it to the Zionist Federation at a meeting to be called for that purpose."

The draft declaration was as follows:

(1) His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as a national home for the Jewish people.

(2) His Majesty's Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object, and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Zionist Organisation."

Anybody who knows exactly what the terms of the Balfour Declaration are knows perfectly well that Mr. Balfour rejected that draft and made it clear in the statement that was subsequently put out as our policy, that he would not accept Palestine as a Jewish state. There was to be constituted in Palestine a National Home for the Jewish people. Let us be quite clear about the Balfour Declaration. Mr. Balfour clearly rejected the specific claim from Lord Rothschild, who had suggested that Palestine should be reconstituted as a national home for the Jewish people. Mr. Balfour had replied "No, nothing of the sort; we will arrange a National Home in Palestine for the Jewish people."

If my hon. Friend does not like what Mr. Balfour said perhaps I might take a more modern authority, none other than Mr. Harold Laski. In November, 1945, writing in "Forward" he said, on the subject of Palestine:

"I do not see in the Balfour Declaration, or in the terms of the Mandate itself, any plan that there shall be a Jewish majority or a Jewish state in Palestine."

If Mr. Harold Laski is not a sufficient authority for my hon. Friend, I do not know who else is. [Laughter.] The hon. Member for West Leicester can laugh, but Mr. Harold Laski was at one time—

Mr. Janner: I suggest that the hon. Member consult the Opposition leader, to see what was said to the Peel Committee, when he will get an answer.

Mr. Stokes: I have quoted to my hon. Friend from Lord Rothschild and Mr. Harold Laski. They seem to be conclusive.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Lipson) on his speech, which I thought was a very brave speech indeed. I agree with almost everything he said, which is not always the case in this House, and particularly with his appeal to the Arab States. The thing that always fills me with horror about imposing any form of partition is the fear that even now may be realised. I hope it will not. It is that there should be a religious war. I join with the hon. Member in the hope that every effort will be made on the part of our Arab friends to see that no injustice is done to the hundreds of thousands of Jews who live in towns on the coast of Africa and in Bagdad, and who have lived there for years with the Arab population. Once a religious war breaks out, God help them. I hope, with my hon. Friend, that every kind of effort will be made to see that that does not happen.

My hon. Friends the Members for Luton (Mr. Warbey) and East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) seemed to indicate that they have seen the red light. They have thought, quite erroneously, what lots of people have said to me, that the Arabs would not accept any form of partition. There is going to be very considerable and prolonged resistance to that proposal, however it is introduced or proposed. It comes ill from them, after the confidence that they showed, that they should ask the Government to turn round on their own terms with the Arabs. Let us make no mistake about the matter. The Arabs are convinced that His Majesty's Government mean what they say that we shall have no part in imposing a solution which is not acceptable to Arabs and Jews. There is no question that the proposal for partition is not acceptable to the Arabs.

I understood the right hon. Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) to say that we should facilitate the implementation of this policy. I would like to be quite clear what he means by facilitate. If he means that we should hand over the books in good order and show the other people the way into the countryside and that we should not just drop everything and run, or show them how to find their way about, well and good. If by facilitate he means keeping order in such a manner in the country as it is kept today so that the Jewish police can do what they like and the Arab police are prevented from

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference

FO 371 61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

doing what they think is right, it will not be a good idea at all.

I read into the speech of the hon. Member for East Coventry the idea that we should be forced to deal with the Arabs, who have never accepted the Mandate or the Balfour Declaration. They have certainly never accepted this partition and they are prevented from taking such steps as they think fit to defend what they regard as their interests. I agree with the right hon. Member for West Bristol that we should get out as soon as possible, and the sooner the better, even if it should be necessary to leave some of our stores.

What puzzled me about the speech of the right hon. Member for West Bristol—I know that he is an ardent partitionist—was that, at the same time as demanding partition, he was also demanding greater unity. That seemed to me a curious course to follow. I do not see how greater unity can be achieved by indulging in partition. There is no use at the present time talking about history to any considerable extent. I hope that whatever the Government may decide, they will turn a completely deaf ear to the clamours of the armchair strategists who are so anxious that the Government should reverse their policy and indulge in the imposition of a little force. I hope the Government will not do anything of the kind. I shall not mention any names, but it always seems astonishing to me that people who have not done very much fighting always seem very keen on having a nice war. I am confident that the general feeling of the public in this country is that the sooner our men are out of Palestine the better, and I hope that the Government will adhere to that policy and get our men out as soon as possible.

While I say it is no use harking on the past, in justice to our Arab friends I think it is useful to recapitulate one or two points, and particularly the point to which I have already referred in connection with the Jewish settlements in the bazaars on the north coast of Africa—namely, that the Arabs in Palestine have always lived at peace with the indigenous Jews. The quarrel is with the European. It is not that the European who happens to come in is a Jew that the Arab dislikes, but the idea that he is going to be kicked out of his country and dominated by a foreign invader.

73 M 25

I must remind the House that the Arabs are the only group of nations who really offered sanctuary to the Jews. They have excepted Palestine, I agree, but the Arab nations themselves have always said that they will join with others in solving the problem of displaced persons, particularly the Jews, and will accept them in all the Arab territories with the exception of Palestine. It is nothing whatever to do with the Arabs that the Jews were persecuted in Europe. Why the Arabs should be asked to find a solution to the problem I fail to understand. It certainly is not just. While I do not want to harp on this problem of the persecution and the horrors which were perpetrated in Central Europe, may I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester that my co-religionists lost as many people in gas chambers as his own. That fact is not always recognised as often as it should.

I would like to say one or two things about the present partition proposal. What staggers me is, first, that anybody should think it will work, because it will not; and secondly, that it is just. How can one possibly envisage areas which are almost 50 per cent. Arab being handed over to the Jews? So far as I know—my right hon. Friend or anybody else can correct me if I am wrong—the population concerned consists roughly of 450,000 Jews under Arab control. If one leaves out Tel Aviv altogether, in which there are about 170,000 Jews and 5,000 Arabs, under this partition there will be 445,000 Arabs dominated by 380,000 Jews. How can one say that such an arrangement will work satisfactorily or can be considered just? I am sure that it will not make for peace, but that it will make for war and the frightening situation which we have already discussed. Whatever else one may say about the Arabs, it is true that they have always sought a peaceful solution. Right up to the very end at U.N.O. they threw everything into the pot and tried hard to find some sort of federal system which would be acceptable, but the intransigents among the Zionists made it out of the question.

The hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke) said that there are some interests in this matter, and I think there is something in that suggestion. The Dead Sea salt is one of those interests. The hon. and gallant Member spoke of there being

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Mr. Stokes.]

33,000 million tons of it. I remember asking questions in the House and eliciting the information that on the 1925 valuation—and there is no difficulty in getting it if one goes about it in the right way—it was worth £240,000 million, and it would be worth double that amount today. That does not take into account gold and other minerals. There is another point which the House ought to know. The Arabs have been told—and I myself was told by one of the most prominent Arabs, King Ibn Saud—that the American Zionists' plan for the Arab peninsula is to get a foothold in Palestine and then spread and take all the surrounding areas. [Laughter.] Hon. Members may laugh, but that is the official doctrine as preached to the Arab leaders by the Americans who say that that is the American Zionist policy. One can understand why the Arabs are very loath to agree to any partition.

A great deal has been said about what has happened at U.N.O., of how fair the decision was, and that, because the decision had been taken, we ought to put our wills, consciences and intelligence into the locker under the bed and just do what we are told. I never realised when I became a supporter of U.N.O. that that would be expected of me. I agree that I expected that I should have to abide by the majority decision, and I am prepared to do so, but it does not make me change my view because the majority of an organisation like that take a certain decision. The question is whether the decision is fair. It is well known in Arab circles that the State Department gave the most specific assurances of complete neutrality, and that they would do nothing whatsoever to persuade the nations at the Council of the United Nations to vote one way or another. According to my Arab informant, had the votes been taken on 26th November, partition would have been defeated by 30 votes in favour, and 18 votes against, because there would not have been the necessary two-thirds majority; whereas three days later, on 29th November, it was carried by 33 votes to 13, giving the necessary two-thirds majority.

I want to quote from the "Philadelphia Record" of 3rd December, 1947:

73 M 26

"Only a few people knew it, but President Truman cracked down harder on his State Department than ever before to swing United Nations votes for the partition of Palestine. Truman called acting Secretary of State Bob Lovett over to the White House on Wednesday and again Friday, warning him he would demand a full explanation if nations which usually line up with the United States failed to do so on Palestine. Truman had in mind the fact that such countries as Liberia"—

which, incidentally, was anti-partitionist on 26th November—

"wholly dependent on the United States; Greece, which would fall overnight without American aid;"—

she voted for partition—

"Haiti"—

which was for partition one night and against it the next—

"which always follows Washington's lead; and Ethiopia, also indebted to the United States, were stepping out of line on Palestine. Half a dozen Latin-American countries were doing likewise, and Truman had inside word that the reason was secret sabotage by certain State Department officials. Mrs. Roosevelt was among those who urged Truman to get busy. In the end, a lot of people used their influence to whip voters into line. Harvey Firestone, who monopolises the rubber plantations of Liberia, got busy with the Liberian Government. Adolph Berle, Adviser to the President of Haiti, swung that vote, Frieda Kirchwey, Editor of the Nation, called Foreign Minister Cal Berenson of New Zealand on the Trans-Pacific telephone and won New Zealand's vote. China's Ambassador Wellington Koo warned his Government that he would resign if China failed to take a stand on Palestine. He did not succeed. French Ambassador Bonnet pleaded with his crisis-laden Government for partition, despite Moslem threats in North Africa which harassed France. He did succeed. However, the two men who swung the most important influence were Foreign Minister Evatt of Australia, who was defeated for the Presidency of the United Nations, and his friend Oswaldo Aranha, who defeated him—both of whom worked together to put across Palestine partition."

Had the vote been taken on 26th November partition would have been defeated. It was delayed until 29th November while the pressure was put on, and so it was carried through. That is the background of what is supposed to be a fair and proper decision. When it was discussed whether the United Nations could legally decide this problem the vote in favour of showing United Nations legality was only carried by 21 votes to 20. In other words, very nearly 50 per cent. of the nations really thought that U.N.O. had no legal right to come to a decision of this kind.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

The Arab peoples, of course, merely think they have been let down—as it seems to me they have—and they have no intention whatever of accepting the proposal. For further American opinion on this subject I will quote another extract, written on 20th November, 1947, from the "New York Times," signed by Mr. Harold Hoskins, who was for a considerable time President Roosevelt's adviser in the Middle East during the war years, and some nine or ten other people whose names I do not remember. This is what Mr. Harold Hoskins and his friends wrote:

"The Jewish national home already established"—

meaning as it is, and as we know it—"can continue, but if the United Nations permit mass immigration, and if the Jews establish their own sovereign State, bitter war in the Middle East is inevitable. The 40 million inhabitants of the Arab League States regard Palestine as vitally important to their renaissance heritage."

It is 20 years too late to consider the partition of Palestine.

Having said that, and put that on record, let me say that the Arabs still want a peaceful solution. They still believe that if somebody would take the lead, a way would be found out of the difficulties. They have a kind of federalisation, and they have offered security to the Jews, with whom they intensely desire to live at peace; but they are not going to agree to partition of any kind whatever, and they wonder if it is not possible for an approach to be made between the Americans and the Arabs or the Arabs and the Jews, even at this late hour, in order to prevent what will certainly be a long and bitter period of bloodshed.

If there is no alternative to partition, then I do wish to add my own voice to those who have already expressed their desire that the Government should clear out quickly. The example has been set in the way in which Tel Aviv has been handed over to a Jewish police force working with the British Police. There is no reason whatsoever why, in other parts of the country, similar arrangements should not be made with both parties. If my right hon. Friend is not satisfied that they have enough strength or organisation to do this, surely there would be no difficulty in suggesting to the Arab States that they should lend a hand? I want our troops out as soon as possible. I do not

want to see them left there until 15th May or 1st August. The sooner we get out the better for everybody.

It must be made abundantly clear to everybody—to the Arabs, in particular—that our method of handing over is a fair one. If, as a result of circumstances unlimited Jewish immigration takes place, then that clearly, will be non-fulfilment of our promise. If, as a result of our trying to keep control until 15th May, what we call illegal immigration goes on at ever increasing speed, then the Arabs will consider themselves completely and utterly betrayed. Whatever anybody may think about the findings of U.N.O., in my view U.N.O. committed political suicide when it came to this decision. I think it has killed itself stone dead already, and that, I think, is absolutely deplorable. I hope some solution other than a Holy War along the whole of the North Coast of Africa and eastwards may be prevented, and that some sort of federalisation, even at this late hour, between the Arabs and the Jews may be found as a possible solution.

8.14 p.m.

Mr. Clement Davies (Montgomery): Most of us in this House have very good reason for knowing that the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) has a most kindly and generous nature, but anyone listening to his speech tonight will be wondering in what way he really thought that it would contribute towards a peaceful solution in Palestine. I was amazed at the whole tone of his speech; but the last few words that he uttered were really almost devastating—referring to the possibility of a blood bath, and ending with a prophecy that U.N.O., in having arrived at a decision with which he does not agree, has really signed its death warrant.

Mr. Stokes: No. By the way in which it arrived at it.

Mr. Davies: My recollection was that it was a more definite statement. However, this is a unique problem—quite unique. I hoped that no one would have indulged to night in recriminations. The whole situation has altered since this matter was put before U.N.O. and the United Nations decision was taken. I am grateful to the Colonial Secretary for a forthright, down-right, straightforward statement, clearly put before us, of what the position was, and I hope that his words will be listened to in every corner of the globe.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

73 M 28

"I do not think one can bandy the word 'justice' about, as has been done in this House tonight. Justice is not an abstract theory. Justice is what is done by men exercising the best judgment they possibly can; it is a human matter. This problem was submitted to all the nations; they have given their judgment; and it does not lie in any one's mouth to say

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

that that judgment is unjust merely because he himself disagrees with the verdict. Life and administration would be impossible, and no rule of law could ever be carried out, if we all took up the attitude that we would accept a judgment which was in our favour but would reject it if it was against us. It is to be hoped that now all parties will accept that judgment.

I am glad to think that the Jewish people as a whole accept the judgment, despite the fact, as has been pointed out, that they have made very great sacrifices, and that the land which they have regarded as their own home and State will be only roughly 12½ per cent. of what they thought they would get under the Balfour Declaration. They are accepting that judgment in the hope that it will bring peace. I deeply regret that the Arab peoples feel the judgment to be an unfair one to them, and I hope they will consider the matter again, and consider it well. We have been their friends and guides, and, what is more, we were the people who emancipated the Arabs. We came to their assistance, helped them, guided them, and then pleaded their cause and helped to form that great unity of the Arab peoples, of which they are so justly proud today. Even under this settlement they are not without many advantages. If they so choose they can create a new Arab State to which 800,000 Arabs will belong, but alongside them will be working the people of the Jewish State.

The hon. Member for Ipswich said he could not understand how peoples could possibly work in unity by having the peoples of two states together as in Palestine. There are plenty of examples where people do work in perfect unity in such circumstances, and I am certainly hopeful that when the terms of the economic situation are considered they will try to work them together. Many things have been mentioned in which they can help one another, such as education, in their institutions and their productive capacity. For example, electricity—which is, I believe, in the main, produced within the Jewish State—is made available to all Arabs who can be reached; so they can work together, and probably more harmoniously than under any other possible system.

The problem remains: Under what conditions will the Mandate be terminated?

73 M 29

I am grateful to the Secretary of State for what he said in that regard. Too often have words been used and cheered in this House, saying that we shall come out of Palestine at the earliest possible moment. What does that really mean? Does it mean that we should leave tonight, leaving those people without a guide, and leaving no one there to maintain order and a rule of law? We have taken up this Mandate and carried it out under great difficulties for a number of years. We have done our best to maintain a rule of law and justice, and it must be the earnest desire of everyone that that should be maintained as long as we are there. When we leave Palestine we should leave it in order; and we should leave in a dignified manner, worthy of the great nation that has undertaken this tremendous duty.

I agree, we must give a specific date. The Secretary of State has given, and rightly given, two dates: one when we hand over the Mandate and the other when we ultimately leave. I am perfectly sure it will be the desire of the Government, and of all nations, that every assistance, help and guidance shall be given to the Commission, every opportunity given to their administrators of studying the problem, and every help given to them to take over when the time comes. I earnestly pray that all will go well, and that there will be no trouble, but that if there is it will be confined to a very few people, because we would like to see this great old country of Palestine become a land of peace and contentment once again.

8.29 p.m.

Colonel J. R. H. Hutchison (Glasgow, Central): I do not think that any good purpose would be served by raking over the ashes of the past. There are in front of us enough burning embers to demand all our attention at the present time. I, too, welcome the firm decision given by the Colonial Secretary, that we shall carry on our Mandate up to and until 15th May, and that then we will definitely lay it down. I agree with the right hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. C. Davies) that, however anxious this country may be—and, indeed, we are all anxious—we cannot walk out and leave the thing in a turbulent mess for the United Nations to carry on after us. I think this clears and defines the position—not very well understood by certain

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

83

1297

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1298

[Colonel Hutchison.]

earlier speakers—that upon our shoulders lies the responsibility, and the whole responsibility, until 15th May, and that thereafter none of the responsibility will be ours, except that we shall still be members of the United Nations.

It cannot be too clearly understood, nor can that line of demarcation be too clearly defined, so that all the world may know just what we are prepared to accept, and where our responsibility will finally end. Out of this sombre and humiliating picture, certain major details stand out. This is, perhaps, the last chance we shall have of putting questions on these details, and our last chance to ask how this plan, fraught with so much danger to all concerned, will be carried out.

The first question I should like to ask the Colonial Secretary is in connection with the Arab area of Jaffa, and the small areas around Tel-Aviv and Ramat Gan. I understand that, as from February, responsibility for the Tel-Aviv pocket will pass into the hands of the Jewish community in that area, and there will be only a rather loose liaison with the British, although we are ultimately responsible. I consider that to be a very dangerous situation. Is it in the form of a sort of dress rehearsal that these two small and highly inflammable areas are to be handed over to the Jews, on the one hand, and to the Arabs, on the other? It must be remembered that the ultimate responsibility throughout all that time is ours.

Those who know about these matters, tell me that the situation is highly explosive. All the world knows that the whole of Palestine is dynamite, but these two small pockets may, after February, become T.N.T. What is going to happen with this Jewish police force responsible for the Tel-Aviv pocket, and the Arab police force responsible for the Jaffa area, which are both ports and liable to be used for immigration, about which we have heard so little, in spite of the many questions that have been asked, with a no-man's-land between, and these two rival races arming, as they are doing at the present time?

Is it likely that these two areas will remain quiescent from February to May, with untried police forces and with only a British liaison officer, until we finally lay down our responsibilities? What is going to happen if one of these two areas

73 M 30

explodes while we are still responsible? We shall surely have to go back and take up the position where we left it in February. I should like to know why this great risk is being taken. Surely it would be much better to accept our responsibilities in full up to 15th May, and not to have some sort of dress-rehearsal for these two pockets.

I will not recapitulate the questions on what will be the immigration programme during this interim period; but I hope that we shall have a reply to the insistent demands which have been made by Members in all parts of the House. Finally, I wish to ask what is to happen to the British women and children who are at present in Palestine. We have not heard anything said about those who are already there. We have been told that there will be no further landings of British women allowed in the future. That does not solve all the questions. There is great interest in this matter. There was in the past, not so long ago, an evacuation of women and children from Palestine known as operation "Folly." That was one gigantic muddle. They were sent to remote camps, some in Egypt; many of them had to wait up to eight weeks for shipping facilities. I hope that lesson has been learned. I hope that our women and children will be evacuated at an early date, and proper arrangements will be made to bring them home in relative comfort.

Finally, under what conditions are the British policemen at present serving in Palestine to be taken into the International Force which will look after Jerusalem? That is a question which many are asking. They do not know on what terms, or, indeed, whether they are to be liable for service in that force. We owe it to them that they should know, at as early a date as possible, on what conditions they will be allowed to serve, and what is to be the law operating in that area. Many problems still remain to be solved. The temper of anxiety in this country will, in my view, not grow less, but greater, as we approach the date of 15th May. I hope that at that time, and not until then, we shall be able to hand over the burden which we have carried for a long time. I claim that we have greatly benefited this country. On 15th May, we shall, perhaps, with a sigh of relief, be able to depart and hand it

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

over to some one who may be able to solve the troubles that we have been unable to solve.

8.37 p.m.

Mr. Henry Osborne (Birmingham, Acock's Green): This is the first time that I have made any contribution in a Debate on Palestine, although for a long time I have taken a great interest in this subject, and I have followed most of the Debates which have taken place. Before, on this occasion, making the one main point which I want to develop, I would like to take up one or two of the points made by previous speakers.

The hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Lipson) drew the conclusion, as it seemed to me, that it was intolerable to support the decision arrived at by the United Nations, because he felt that decision was unjust. Whereupon, he was followed by the hon. Member for Luton (Mr. Warbey) who metaphorically knocked him for six, or thought he had. I believe that there is more sense in what the hon. Member for Cheltenham had to say than apparently meets the eye. It is true, I think, that the decision was made legitimately, so far as it is possible to make a decision legitimate on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, by a clear majority, but it should be remembered that the vote of a nation like Luxemburg, with a population of 300,000, is counted as equal to the vote of India, with 300 million.

I cannot myself believe that there is a great deal of justice attached to a decision which is arrived at on the assumption that one vote by one nation is of equal value to a vote representing 1,000 times that number of people. I would like to remind the House that 150 years ago it was decided by the founding fathers of the American constitution that one negro equalled three-fifths of a white man, which was largely the cause of the civil war in 1861. Now we apparently are endeavouring to base justice on the assumption that one Luxemburgois is equal to 1,000 Indians. I do not think that one can assume that there is in that sense a great deal of justice attached to it; nevertheless we have done the best we can. The decision was arrived at by the United Nations, and it is right and proper that we should accept that decision and carry it out.

73 M 31

I should like to make the main point which I wish to argue. On Friday, 3rd October last, I was interviewed on the radio in Detroit, and during the course of that interview I was asked to give my opinion on the Bevin policy with regard to Palestine. I have not a record of exactly what I said, because the interview was unrehearsed, and impromptu and without a script. But I recall that I said then that I believed the British foreign policy in Palestine was wrong, because in my opinion the issue of partition had become clear at least a year ago, and that I could not, therefore, see any good purpose served by further delay in accepting that conclusion.

At the time I was interviewed I believed what I said, and I held those views with complete sincerity, but, as I suppose not infrequently happens after one goes on the record, one has another think; certainly I did. It then subsequently occurred to me that there were a number of factors, the true emphasis of which I had not previously appreciated. I should like if I might to develop that line of argument tonight, because it did greatly impress me as it began to unfold against the background of the American scene and in view of that radio interview I had given. Earlier this year I had taken part in a discussion on the report of the Anglo-American Commission, and during the course of the discussion I was told by the expert who was addressing us that partition was opposed by a number of people on the ground that if it were imposed the Russians might get behind the Arabs, who clearly would not accept the decision, and that would produce an extremely dangerous situation.

Mr. Manningham-Buller (Daventry): Would the hon. Gentleman specify which Anglo-American Commission he means?

Mr. Osborne: The most recent one which I think reported at the beginning of this year. It was the most recent Anglo-American Commission, not the U.N.S.C.O.P. one, but the one that produced the Debate out of which the Morrison Plan arose. The information I am quoting was given by the speaker who was discussing Palestine.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: As the hon. Gentleman is referring to the Anglo-American Commission which reported in 1946, of which I was a member, I think

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

73 M 32

Mr. Harold Roberts (Birmingham, Handsworth): It was not my intention to intervene in this Debate but, as I have sat here I have felt it is the duty of all of us to try, if we can, to assist the Government by putting whatever ideas we have into the common stock, however ragged and disjointed they may be, in case they are of some help to Ministers.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

When I stood for Parliament I received a deputation from the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation, who asked me for assurances in support of the claims of Jewry. I told them that in my humble judgment, the tragedy of Palestine lay in the fact that it was not a conflict between right and wrong but a conflict between two rights; that none of us is entirely free from prejudice, and that in so far as I had any prejudice, it was in favour of the Jews. Indeed, it is difficult to think of any man of any sensibility who cannot but pity the sufferings of those people over 20 centuries. However, I went on to say that the matter was one of such difficulty that, no matter what party might be in power, it would take a great deal to goad me into severe criticism of the Government which had to bear the burden of implementing the policy decided by this House and by the nation.

In the two years which have passed, I have seen no reason to vary my opinion. I disagree with the senior Burgess for Cambridge University (Mr. Pickthorn) when he deprecates the suggestion that this should be called a problem, thereby implying that there is a solution. It may well be that there are problems to which there is no tidy or clear-cut solution and, indeed, if I am asked whether I have anywhere seen any helpful suggestion for solving this terrible problem, I have only found it in one place—in a memorandum put forward some two years ago by the Society of Friends which urged that there should be a new start made by an attempt to call a goodwill conference between high-up Jews and high-up Arabs. That might be a forlorn hope, but it is the only one I have seen which would lead to a true solution. I do not believe that a solution can be obtained, tidy, well-knit, by exterior force.

Therefore, I am bound to say that we must have regard to what burdens the people of this country can bear, for they have a right to be considered. I get letters from parents whose sons are serving as conscripts in Palestine. Parents in time of war have to make, and will make, great sacrifices of their dearest ones; but I ask myself, have I any moral right, in order to enforce a tidy solution, to condemn one of my constituents to have his or her son in a country where his fate may be, not to fall in battle on behalf of

his country, but to be murdered by those whom we are trying to help? I am bound to say that my answer to that question must be in the negative. I have no children of an age to be exposed to that, but if I had I should feel strongly about it.

I think the Ministerial decision to terminate our connection with the country is the right one. Furthermore, I say to the Ministers, "Expedite it, if you can." I do not say that with any intent to embarrass Ministers, or to throw sand into the machinery, or make their difficult task yet more difficult. But do not let us be deluded into believing that by staying on we shall ever be able to leave the country nicely tidied up. We did not leave Ireland nicely tidied up. When we left that country there followed for a year what have been called "The troubles." We accelerated our departure from India. I hope and pray that that great sub-Continent may settle down to an era of peace and prosperity, but no one could pretend that the first three or four months after our departure have been tidy or harmonious times.

Mr. Wyatt: Is not the hon. Member aware that there are no riots of any description going on in India anywhere at the moment, and that the only trouble is in the very north-east of India and Kashmir?

Mr. Roberts: I do not think the hon. Member would find anything in my remarks which suggested otherwise. For his benefit I will repeat what I said—I hope and pray that that great sub-Continent may settle down to an era of peace and prosperity, but no one could pretend that the time since our departure has been one of peace or ease. If the hon. Member has followed the course of events, he will not think so either. Whether we leave on 15th May, or any other date, we shall not leave things tidied up. I beg of Ministers if they think they can do so without any very serious detriment, to accelerate our departure. We must remember that the frailty of man must inevitably condemn parts of this globe to quarrels and to unhappiness, but not only is it not our duty, but it is not our moral right, to act as censors, or as policemen for the whole world.

It is our duty when we have undertaken a task and discharged it with

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

87

1305

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1306

[Mr. Roberts.]

obloquy from both sides for nearly 30 years, to leave it as little unfinished as may be. But there comes a time when we are entitled to say, "We must consider our own people; we decline any longer to carry this burden for the whole world while the greater part of the world shirks its responsibility; we will not submit to being lectured by those who do not themselves do a hand's turn to help carry our burden; we will throw responsibility back where it must ultimately belong, on to the people, Jew and Arab, who live in that country." I say, not in any bitter spirit, but from the bottom of my heart, may God bless them. May they take heed of the wise advice I mentioned when I began—that of the Society of Friends. Only along those lines is it possible to compose their differences and, one hopes, bring them a happier future.

9.0 p.m.

Mr. Thomas Reid (Swindon): In the course of the Debate many speakers have praised the work of our staff in Palestine. I was there in the middle of the Arab Rebellion, and it was a very unpleasant time to be alive in Palestine; there was a good chance of being dead before night-fall. This unfortunate staff of ours have had to work, not for a year or for six months, as I did, in the midst of that atmosphere, but year after year. They were the targets of abuse from many sides, and yet they carried on. I join with the other hon. Members in paying my tribute to their work. I hope, and sincerely believe, that the Government will, when we leave Palestine, see that these officers are generously treated.

The right hon. Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) says that the Government have had no policy for the last two years, and had no policy for the 18 months before we referred this dispute to the United Nations. That is a little ungenerous to our Foreign Secretary. What did the Foreign Secretary take over? He took over the policy which had been carried on by the Coalition Government, and before that by the Conservative Government, and during all those years the various Governments had failed to solve this problem. Then, of course, the Foreign Secretary was saddled by resolutions passed at Labour Conferences in the two years before we took office, policies for which, I am proud to say, I am not

responsible, and if the people who passed that policy, including the executive, had listened to me, we should not be in the mess which we are in today. The right hon. Gentleman and his party, in 1938, when I was mixed up with this subject, had a policy—partition. Why did they not carry it through if it was such a sound policy, and if the present Foreign Secretary is so backward because he does not carry through such a policy?

The Government of that time sent to Palestine a Commission, of which I was a member, and I took a foremost part in destroying that policy limb by limb. In my dissent I did not leave room for a needle to get through it. I had the privilege of making a Tory Government abandon the policy which they had adopted in principle, and adopt roughly my policy 100 per cent., including the policy of my colleagues on the Commission. So, is the present Foreign Secretary so greatly to blame for not adopting a policy which a Conservative Government adopted and abandoned because they could not see their way to put it through except by force? When the right hon. Gentleman now sees his beautiful policy adopted by the United Nations, what does he do? He says, "Run away from it, do not implement it, leave it to the United Nations." Is the right hon. Gentleman's criticism of the foreign policy of our great Foreign Secretary justifiable?

As he has referred to past policy about Palestine, I would say of all the people who handled the Palestine problem from the time of the Balfour Declaration down to the day when my right hon. Friend came into office, that I hope they will be dead before their history is written, because anything more incompetent does not exist in our annals. That is the view of all people who know Palestine, especially of those who worked and lived in Palestine, and who had to carry out the administration there, in spite of the vacillations of the people at home who had control of Palestine.

Major Guy Lloyd (Renfrew, Eastern): The hon. Member has quite rightly mentioned the Foreign Secretary and his policy and attitude, but the Foreign Secretary has not been in the House all day on the occasion of this vital Debate.

Mr. McKinlay (Dumbartonshire): Neither has the hon. and gallant Member.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

The Minister of State (Mr. McNeil): I am quite sure that the hon. and gallant Gentleman did not mean that thrust. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has, of course, been at Lancaster House.

Mr. Reid: I have been mixed up in this matter very intimately indeed since 1938. I had a considerable knowledge of the East long before that. I take off my hat to the present Foreign Secretary for his courage. He did not believe in the policy which the Conservative Government had, and why should he therefore carry it out? He did not believe in it because he knew, as I do, that it was unjust and unwise. In spite of the fact that the Labour Party, by an overwhelming majority, or unanimously, had passed at two conferences, an absurd and impossible proposition that the Arabs should quit Palestine to make room for Jews and a Jewish State, and all the rest of it, he had the courage to stand up against that also. Of all the people who have handled the Palestine problem, the last one who should be attacked is the present Foreign Secretary.

I have criticised our politicians adversely regardless of party, in regard to their handling of the Palestine problem. The thing started off with the Balfour Declaration. Other hon. Members have mentioned that, and I have a right to come back to it. The Balfour Declaration was an iniquitous thing passed without the consent or the knowledge of the Arabs. There is no getting away from that; no quibbling can get round that. It promised a Jewish National Home. That was a promise made by the British Government in regard to territory over which they had no control, which they did not own and did not even possess. Hon. Gentlemen who raise these questions must expect to have their criticisms answered. I am able and willing to answer them.

Following that, they got the Balfour Declaration entwined in the Mandate. Then they said they would wipe out all the past. They said, in effect, "It is true that we have given half a dozen promises to the Arabs that after the war—in which they fought so valiantly on our side—we would give them independence." They are all wiped out by the Mandate. What did the Mandate promise? It did not promise a Jewish State. Indeed, the British Government refused the Zionist

demand for a Jewish State and offered instead this National Home which was a cultural and religious home which the true Zionists wanted. Also, the Mandate envisaged independence at the end of a temporary period under British rule. What is offered now?

Now the Mandate is to be cast aside and, in defiance of it, we are to have Palestine carved up with a Jewish State set up contrary to the Mandate, contrary to all our and Allied promises and contrary to justice. We are to give a Jewish State in Palestine, to a minority of immigrants in a land in which the Arabs have lived for 1,300 years, because the Jews had a state there 2,000 years ago. Can anyone justify that on any principles of legality or morality? Nobody can. The Jewish leaders themselves admit that it is unjust, but they say that it is a smaller injustice than to have the Jews marooned in Europe in displaced persons camps.

We went out to Palestine—some of us were trained administrators and politicians—in the Commission of 1938. We worked at this problem for six months, not in the superficial way in which it is often treated in the Press and on the platform. We went through all Palestine, studied its maps and everything else, and we looked at the system from the financial, strategic, economic and political points of view. Finally, we decided that the most we could do was to pick out the best of four plans in which there would be a little Jewish State on the coast—and then we decided that it was impracticable on every ground. The Conservative Party decided that on every ground partition was impracticable. What has happened since then to make it practicable? What has happened since then to make it just?

The partition plan drawn up by U.N.O. if it could be termed a plan—it is a little sketchy, a jig-saw puzzle—is very different from the partition plan which we drew up in 1938, after six months of patient work. It is a jig-saw puzzle, ridiculous to look at, and utterly unjust. The proposal is to hand over a vast part of Palestine, about 60 per cent. of it, to immigrants, and to leave the unfortunate Arabs that part of the hill country which is of little use. We went into all this in 1938, and we found out that if we set up a Jewish state then a viable Arab state could not exist either financially or economically. As is well

88 10

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

89

1309

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1310

[Mr. Reid.]

known the best part of Palestine is the Maritime plain, with good rainfall and subsoil water. Half of Palestine is a semi desert, and the hill country is not of much value.

Is this preposterous plan what the conscience of mankind has done in U.N.O. for the settlement of Palestine? The conscience of mankind, if you please! It is an iniquitous scheme, and the chief instigator is a country for whom I have the profoundest love and admiration, next after my own, namely America. I do not believe all the tales about America, about the almighty dollar, and the rest. Americans are a very noble people and have more idealism than most nations of the world. But I have a criticism to make of America on this occasion, or at least of the American delegates to U.N.O. What is the motive? Let us be frank about it. One of the chief motives is that the Jews have a controlling voice in the election for the President in the States of New York, Illinois, Ohio and elsewhere in America. I suggest that the chief reason for this evil proposal of U.N.O. is that the political parties in America, or their party machines, are partly at the electoral mercy of the Jews. That is public knowledge.

I would ask, if my voice travels as far as America—and it is weak and I am only a back bencher—whether Abraham Lincoln would not turn in his grave if he saw what the Americans are proposing to do with Palestine. He fought a civil war for four years to prevent the citizens of the Southern States, of their own free will, breaking off from the Union. Now America says "This Palestine problem is troublesome. We are going to carve it up in a most unjust fashion whether Palestinians like it or not," and give the best part of the country to a minority composed mostly of immigrants. It is necessary to speak of these things, and to let the world know what is going on. The Americans also have an anti-Communist policy in Europe. I am not saying whether that is right or wrong, but what is happening now? Communist powers are being brought into the Middle East. That is a fact.

Several hon. Members have said that our boys must not fight to establish this Jewish state. I say so too. Both Arabs and Jews have said recently that they

73 M 36

want us to quit. I think that in their heart of hearts neither of them want us to quit. Each side wants us to stay and fight their battles. But they have said they want us to quit, and that is one reason why we should. Secondly, we should quit because we cannot use our boys to implement this iniquitous policy, and, thirdly, we should quit from the point of view of practical politics. Any Government that sends our boys to fight Jew or Arab in Palestine will not remain long in office. I think it is only right that those people who proposed this monstrous scheme and tried to get us to implement it, and then tried in vain to get America to implement it should do their own fighting, and carry out their own scheme.

The proposal was put forward tonight that we should organise a U.N.O. police force which, in the words of the hon. Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) would prevent disaster in the whole of the Middle East. I am glad he is converted. When he came back from Palestine he was under the impression that the Arabs in Palestine would soon be scuppered and the Arab states did not matter much.

Mr. McKinlay (Dumbartonshire): The hon. Member is three or four months older now.

Mr. Reid: Maybe now, when the scheme of which he is so fond—partition—exists on paper, he sees it in a different light. I suggest to my hon. Friends on this side of the House that they might ask themselves who has been the better guide—the hon. Member for East Coventry or myself? On two occasions, in the first speech which I made in this House two years ago and again recently, I said that the policy of partition would send the Middle East up in flames, and I say the same now. It is no use hiding these things; everyone knows them.

Who is the better guide? Supposing U.N.O. decides to send their Commissioners out and that they find that a force is essential? They will then have the opportunity of putting themselves at the head of Haganah and of becoming head of a Jewish party, or of getting troops from outside, because our Government is not going to help them. If it is decided to create a U.N.O. force, how many years will it take to organise it? We know how very quickly things move in U.N.O., and

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

I do not know whether this would have to be sanctioned by the Security Council, though we all know how that Council works, with a veto to prevent anything happening. The proposal is that we should wait until the international force is organised, and that we should hold the baby until then. That is the last thing we should do. My hon. Friend gets out of that by saying, "We do not want this force to do any fighting in Palestine, but only to secure the boundaries against incomers." In other words, he does not want the Arab States to take part, while the Jews would be free to send forces from overseas. It is too ingenious for words, and I think the hon. Member must think we are all children.

There is another point. The question was raised that we are bound to carry out the decision of U.N.O. Well, are we? First of all, this territory of Palestine was a Mandated Territory. We never put it under the trusteeship of U.N.O., and, therefore, U.N.O. really has no authority over it. What we did do was, when America destroyed the chance of making peace in Palestine at the dictation of political Zionists, we felt bound to refer the matter for advice to U.N.O. They have gone into it, and have given us thoroughly bad and impossible advice, which cannot be carried out, and therefore, we are not bound to accept the advice of U.N.O. This territory is not under the trusteeship of U.N.O., and what will happen to it in future I do not know. I say that, on purely legal grounds, we are not in the least bound to carry out the advice of U.N.O.

Secondly, on moral grounds, I think I am right in saying that my right hon. Friend said that he was opposed to partition long ago. There is no reason why this Government should carry out a policy of which they thoroughly disapprove. Before the U.N.O. meeting occurred, it was announced in another place that we would not necessarily accept the decision of U.N.O., and my right hon. Friend at Lake Success told U.N.O. exactly what we would not do, so that we are not bound, morally or legally, to carry out the advice of U.N.O. The wise people who framed that advice should carry it out themselves, and I wish them joy in the task.

The people of this country will not let any Government send out their boys to die in a Palestine fight between Jews

and Arabs, and I am quite sure that those hon. Members on all sides of the House who desire to see a reduction in the Forces, or a reduction in the period of service, will all vote against sending our troops there or keeping our troops in Palestine. I am also perfectly certain that any hon. Members who object to making war on religious, or other grounds, will not approve of our sending troops to kill the Arabs who are fighting for their independence.

If we get out according to the programme which my right hon. Friend outlined, on 15th May, and again on 1st August, I shall be greatly surprised. This matter may be settled according to the timetable, but a great many things will happen to prevent that policy being carried out. The U.N.O. people want to entangle us; they want us to stay after the Commission arrives, when the balloon may go up. I beg my right hon. Friend and the Government to see that we are not dragged into this war. It is not a war of our making; it is against our policy, and we must not get entangled in it.

One final word. When I was in Palestine on this Commission, we met Jews and a few Arabs. I stated then that the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine could live together in amity. I say the same today. The mischief makers are from outside. I know the people I am speaking about; the Jews who wrote us confidential letters telling us what their real opinion was. I know the opinions of the Jews in Palestine. The ordinary Jew and Arab who are in the front line and who know what disasters will come to them, want peace. I appeal to the Jews and Arabs in Palestine to say to all the outsiders, "Get out, and let us settle this matter ourselves." I say to the Jews in this House, and everywhere, as I have said all along, that they are on the high road to ultimate destruction, whatever happens in the next few years. I have told my Jewish friends that I am a better friend to them than any political Zionist. I am trying to save them and the Arabs from destruction. The only way is for them to get rid of their evil advisers, and to make an arrangement among themselves which can be submitted to U.N.O., even at this late hour, and which could then be implemented.

90

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

9.23 p.m.

Mr. T. Reid: What the hon. and learned Gentleman says is quite true, but I did point out that America was the nigger in the woodpile most of the time, preventing

In our efforts to fulfil our duty we have been unsparing, and many British men have devoted their best years to this work. I wonder what the future will be for those British civil servants and British police still in Palestine? My right hon. Friend said he hoped they would be dealt with generously. The Secretary of State for the Colonies really said nothing specific about their treatment and I would ask

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

that when proposals are formulated to deal with them they should be included in a White Paper which we could discuss and not merely contained in a regulation which we either have to throw out or accept without any power of Amendment.

Not only have many British people worked throughout their lives in Palestine, but, as has been pointed out, many lives have been sacrificed and vast sums of money expended. We are entitled to consider now whether all that has been in vain. In my view the answer is in the negative. If you contrast the conditions of the Arabs in Palestine, as I saw them in 1946, with the conditions at the time we liberated them from the Turks, that contrast is immense. It is doubtful indeed whether there would be so many Arabs alive in Palestine today but for the health services we have provided and it is doubtful whether they would enjoy their present standard of life had it not been for our rule. On the other hand, we have done much to promote the Jewish National Home. The Jews have done great work in Palestine in the impetuosity of their demands, but they should not ignore the facts that under British rule the Jewish National Home has grown and flourished. To both Jews and Arabs our rule has brought great benefits.

Now, in my opinion, all we have done, all the Jews have done, all the achievements of the last 30 years, are in jeopardy. The decision of the General Assembly may have been the judgment of Solomon, but I must confess that, in my personal view, I do not regard it as such. I do not say that because they have decided on partition. Many in this country are in favour of that. Much depends on where the boundary lines are drawn. Personally, I have never thought it possible to achieve partition without the presence in that country of very considerable forces for the maintenance of law and order. Of course, if agreement between Jew and Arab can be secured, partition becomes feasible; so does federalisation; so does cantonisation.

Perhaps agreement might have been secured in 1945—I do not know—but I have no doubt that the prospect of agreement between Jew and Arab at that time was gravely prejudiced by the pledges of the party opposite before the General

Election. I am satisfied that there was no prospect of securing agreement by 1946, and by February, 1947, the Government had come to that conclusion. Once we come to that conclusion, what follows? Surely, it is this: that there is a necessity for some other power in that country to prevent Jew and Arab from flying at each other's throats, to keep the peace in Palestine, and to preserve the progress made in years gone by. Surely, if agreement is unobtainable, there must be some such power prepared to put in men and money.

My personal criticism of the decision of the United Nations is not so much that they decided on partition—though I think that their scheme itself is open to some criticism, and I hope it will be adjusted—but that they decided it without any adequate provision to secure its enforcement on people two thirds of whom are unwilling to accept it. The Secretary of State himself said that they had made little provision for enforcement. Had the General Assembly any reason to suppose we would implement any decision to which they came? I think it is clear from what the right hon. Gentleman said in opening the Debate that the answer to that question is in the negative. If that is clear, then I think it follows that this country has very little responsibility for the consequences of that decision.

I say "very little" and not "no responsibility" for this reason: I think the duty lay with His Majesty's Government, with all the experience that we have had, and all the knowledge that we possess of conditions in Palestine, not merely to place the problem on the table and say, "We want your advice," but to go further, and to take a line of our own about what should be done in Palestine. That is what His Majesty's Government have not as yet done. The Government should have said, "This is the course that we advise should be followed in Palestine, these are the alterations to the Mandate which we suggest, this is the assistance which we require." They should have said: "If you adopt our suggestions we can and will carry on until peace is established and we can depart." That bold course, that policy, would have commanded respect even if it invited criticism.

It is because we did not adopt that course—indeed, because we put no policy

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
	1			2	

Reference: **FO** 371 / 61797

93

1317

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1318

[Mr. Manningham-Buller.]
forward as to what should be done, and have not done so since the last Election—and, indeed, because apparently from the right hon. Gentleman's statement we have no clear policy as to the course we should pursue now, that I say that the attitude and conduct of His Majesty's Government has in this respect been unworthy—that was the adjective used by the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Ivor Thomas), who was formerly Under-Secretary of State—unworthy of this great country. I say that the Government are not entirely free from responsibility for the consequences of that decision.

I said that this scheme of partition was open to grave criticism. I see from the report of the General Assembly, Volume I of the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine, at page 59, that the Jewish State will contain 498,000 Jews and 407,000 Arabs, and the Arab State will contain 10,000 Jews and 725,000 Arabs. It then says:

"In addition, there will be in the Jewish State about 90,000 Bedouins, cultivators and stockholders."

Therefore, if those figures are correct, the total in the Jewish State will be a majority of 498,000 Jews, and a minority of 497,000 Arabs and Bedouins. Those figures, of course, will require some adjustment if Jaffa is excluded, and some more of the country round Beersheba included in the Arab State, but I do not know to what degree the adjustment will be. The hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) gave some figures, upon which I cannot express any views, but it would be interesting if we could be given the figures officially.

For a moment, I should like the House to look at the position of this large majority, and, indeed, of the Jewish minority in the Arab State under this scheme. Those 497,000 Arabs and Bedouins under the proposals contained in this document, and the Jews in the Arab State, will not have any vote in the state in which they reside; in the state in which they and their families may have lived for generations, they will have no say in the Government.

Mr. Crossman: Why?

Mr. Manningham-Buller: I turn to paragraph 9 of the report of the *ad hoc* Committee on the Palestinian question:

73 M 40

"The Arabs of the Arab State and the Jews of the Jewish State shall be entitled to vote in the Arab and Jewish States respectively."

That is quite clear. That does not mean the Arab in the Jewish State shall have a vote in the Jewish State. To my mind, that is quite clear. I will also read from Chapter III, paragraph 1, dealing with citizenship:

"Arabs residing in the area of the proposed Jewish State and Jews residing in the area of the proposed Arab State who have signed a notice of intention to opt for citizenship of the other State shall be eligible for election to the constituent assembly of that State, but not for election to the constituent assembly of the State in which they reside."

Mr. Lever (Manchester, Exchange):
"To opt."

Mr. Crossman: I think there is a misunderstanding. Surely, nobody who has opted for the other State has no right to vote in his own State? I have never heard any suggestion that full citizenship rights were not allowed on both sides. Indeed, under the agreement they are guaranteed.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman who replies for the Government will make the position clear, but I think the hon. Member will find the voting power is given in page 9 of the document, where it says:

"The Arabs of the Arab State and the Jews of the Jewish State shall be entitled to vote in the Arab and Jewish States respectively."
Nothing at all is said about—

Mr. Lever: Read on.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: It goes on:

"Women may vote and be elected to the constituent assembly during the transitional period. No Jew shall be permitted to establish residence in the area of the proposed Arab State and no Arab shall be permitted to establish residence in the area of the proposed Jewish State."

I do not see that that has much to do with it. I hope that I am wrong, but it is a point that should be cleared up.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Ernest Bevin): I agree.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: I am a little puzzled whether the inclusion of such a large minority is consistent with the terms of the Atlantic Charter, that is, under the third provision which refers to "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they shall live, and

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

to the restoration of self-government to those who have been deprived of it by force." I take the view that the Government are right to say they will not enforce this scheme. I am a little puzzled about the discrepancy, to which the hon. Member for Luton (Mr. Warbey) drew attention, between the statement made in this document that we will not enforce this scheme and the statement by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State that Sir Alexander Cadogan said we ought not to have sole responsibility for enforcement. I hope it will be made clear that we are not prepared to use force to carry out this particular provision. The hon. Member for Luton went a great deal further. Apparently he was prepared to advocate that British troops should be supplied to form part of a collective force, presumably to take part in a collective war if one occurred. I wonder who would command that force if that happened. Would it be under the command of this Commission consisting of Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama and the Philippines?

Whatever view the Government may take upon the use of force to implement this scheme, I would say that we of this country have done so much for Palestine that we really ought to be relieved of the burden of using manpower to carry out this particular scheme, and that those who voted for it and are really responsible for the decision are the people who should step forward now; that on no account should British troops be put under the command of any other nation, or combination of nations, for the purpose of carrying out partition, and for fighting against the Jews or Arabs, or both, to achieve the fulfilment of this scheme.

Mr. Warbey: Does the hon. and learned Member mean that if the Security Council, to which we belong, took a decision in regard to collective enforcement action in Palestine, we should contract out of our share of responsibility?

Mr. Stokes: They have already.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: The veto surely applies if we were not prepared to act. In any case, I think that is a question which the hon. Member should address to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

73 M 41

Dr. Morgan (Rochdale): The hon. and learned Member is running away.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: I am not. I am expressing my personal view that after all we have done in Palestine, we are entitled to say now that if men are required, they should not be British troops. As I said at the commencement of my speech, I fear for the consequences. I fear that the United Nations may regret the decision to which they have come, and fear that those Jews who have always advocated a Jewish State, who have not refrained from attacking those who have protected them in the past and are risking their lives to protect them now, may come to realise that as Samson brought down the pillars of the Temple, so they have brought down the Jewish National Home to ruin and destruction.

I hope, indeed, that will not happen, but I fear that it may. I would like to see peace in Palestine, and I would not like to say anything—and I hope that I have not—to exacerbate the situation, which is full of dangers for both Jews and Arabs. I would hesitate to predict who would win the war if there was a war between Jew and Arab in Palestine, or to what areas it might not spread. I would like to do anything I can to help bring about agreement, and that peace on which development and prosperity for Jews and Arabs alike in Palestine depends.

I hope that it will not be too late for wise counsels to prevail, and if they do not, then, I suppose, bloodshed may ensue. I join with the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) and the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Lipson) in expressing the hope that it will not spread to the other Arab States which contain within their boundaries so many Jews who have lived for so many years in perfect peace and friendship. What should our attitude be? I take the view, already expressed from this side of the House, that we should get out and get out as soon as possible. I do not believe that there is anything to be gained by delay. The longer we are there, the more will each side prepare for the day when we go, and the greater then may be the conflagration.

The right hon. Gentleman said we had in mind the date 15th May for the termination of the Mandate. He gave no

94

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

73 M 42

Mr. Silverman: But the hon. and learned Gentleman said it.

COPIRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

accept
s. My
decision
our best
ng over
that at

has just
d Mem-
Service
thought
e House
ed both
ne time
hen de-
staffs
e, and
that as
imme-
would

pe we
sidering
d hav-
matter
ignor-
gration,
indeed.
Colonial
in his
as to
ation to
e Man-
s been
before
ping to
now in
e time
are no
on, but
issue is
ning as
nt hon.

ne hon.
be done
ought
and Air
y which
end in

would
nk it is
should

n. and

Mr. Manningham-Buller: But I am asking questions about it. I am seeking information because the right hon. Gentlemen dealt very lightly and very shortly with this matter. If I am asked what my view is, my personal view is that while the Mandate is in existence until we surrender it we are bound by the obligations contained in the Mandate.

Mr. Silverman: But the White Paper was contrary to it.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: At this late hour I do not want to engage in controversy with regard to the White Paper of 1939. I see no reason why at this stage we should go back to that, because if we go back to it we shall probably go back further even to the McMahon letters or the Balfour Declaration.

Mr. Bevin: Or Moses.

Mr. Manningham-Buller: I should like to say one further thing. The hon. Member for Acock's Green (Mr. Osborne) referred to the Anglo-American Commission on which the hon. Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) and I served. He said that he had been informed by a speaker whose name he was reluctant to reveal that our reason for rejecting partition was because we feared if there was an Arab State it would mean Russian intervention. That is a wonderful story, but I am sure the hon. Member for East Coventry will agree that there is absolutely no foundation for it. It is a pity that the hon. Member for Acock's Green should circulate reports of that sort when, if only he would turn to page 43 of the Report which we signed, he will find this:

"Partition has the appeal at first sight of giving the prospect of early independence and self-government to Jews and Arabs, but in our view no partition would have any chance unless it is basically acceptable to Jews and Arabs. There is no sign of that today."

That states quite accurately the reasons why we at that time, expressing our personal views, were opposed to partition.

Most hon. Members who have spoken have done so with great feeling of anxiety as to what will happen in the future. At this time, at this season of the year, the thoughts of all Christian people turn towards Palestine with memory of events that happened there nearly 2,000 years ago. In a short time we may once again hear on the wireless the bells of Bethlehem

carrying their message to us all, and it is a terrible thing to think that that land, that Holy Land, is still torn by struggle and by faction.

But I believe that the course that we should follow is absolutely clear. As I said, we must adopt the decision of the United Nations. We have no alternative to that. We must assist the Commission and facilitate the achievement of their most difficult task. We must hope and pray that the controversy and conflict between those two Semitic races will not lead to war, bloodshed and the loss of very many lives. We must pray that our assistance, advice and guidance may perhaps be usefully employed on a future occasion in the promotion of peace and prosperity in that land and its development, and that in spite of what has happened in the last years, in spite of the fears which some of us have, when we come to leave Palestine the inhabitants of that country will forget the friction in which we were involved—almost entirely because of their controversy with each other—and will reflect upon the good work that was done by British men and women in the course of the long years during which we held the Mandate and, in the most difficult circumstances, tried to administer justice in its true sense.

9.58 p.m.

Mr. A. Edward Davies (Burslem): At this late hour I would have preferred to leave what I have to say on the subject of Palestine until tomorrow, but now that you have called me, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that as an ordinary observer, not an expert, on the subject of Palestine, I hope we shall pay due attention to the responsibilities which this great nation has in the event of the United Nations organisation being called upon to "hold the ring." There is no desire among the people of this country to be engaged in war, and as a man of peace, I hope that we shall advocate all peaceful measures and keep out of a world conflagration, but we have pinned our faith in the United Nations, and although it may seem momentarily embarrassing to honour our obligations, I believe that in the long run and in the best interests of all countries we must courageously face the position. If called upon to take our share with the other nations of the world—America, Russia and some of the others—we should do so. I know this will not

[Mr. Davies.]

It being Ten o'Clock, the Motion for the Adjournment lapsed, without Question put.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

98

12 DEC 1947

Reference:

27

61792

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

99

good policy, a bad policy, an indifferent policy, a just or an unjust policy—any kind of policy is better than none, or carrying on as we have been carrying on in Palestine for the past two and a half years.

The first element of relief in the present situation is that, at any rate, a plan has been adopted; a plan has been accepted, and some attempt will be made to carry it out. I should have thought that at any rate that was something about which all of us could rejoice. I do not know whether anyone thinks that there could have been a better plan; I do not know myself; but I do not think that it lies in the mouth of either the Government or of the Opposition to complain of this plan, in the absence of any word of advice or any idea of their own as to what else should have been done. I will return to that point in a moment or two.

Let me come to the second point which seems to me a thing about which to rejoice—and where there is so little about which to rejoice, let us not neglect what there is. Since the end of the war, a situation has developed—and I am not talking now of Palestine but of the world as a whole—which, in one important respect, is far worse than the situation during the war. During the war, even if imposed only by the exigency of the immediate situation and the necessity of victory, at any rate some kind of concerted policy and action by the great, and, indeed, the small Powers of the earth—so far as they were able to make themselves heard—was maintained. Since the end of the war that has broken up. For 2½ years the attempt to set up a society of nations has been abortive. Yet every one has known that unless that society of nations could be set up, and could work, there was no hope for the peace of mankind or the future of the world. In that situation, problem after problem, requiring international consideration and international solution, has been submitted to the United Nations organisation, where no agreement has been reached and no solution has been offered.

Palestine was not the least of such international problems. Indeed, one of the major difficulties in dealing with it was that we could not confine ourselves—and no one complains that the Government did not confine themselves—to the claims of the people on the spot, or those

PALESTINE

Motion made, and Question proposed,
That this House do now adjourn.—
[Mr. William Whiteley.]

11.6 a.m.

Mr. Sydney Silverman (Nelson and Colne): Yesterday, I listened to not quite all but nearly all of what I cannot help describing as a very dull and dreary Debate. From the speeches on both sides of the House one would have thought that these were the attendances at a rather poverty stricken funeral. I cannot understand the air of despondency, tragedy and misery which seemed to enshroud all the speeches. That the situation in Palestine and the Middle East is almost desperate is true. But what is there new in that? It has been desperate for a long time. The one thing, the first and almost the only thing that the country required was a policy. I do not say for the moment what policy; a

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

100

1337

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1338

[Mr. Silverman.]

for whom they were immediately responsible. One of the major difficulties was the widespread international repercussions that might follow upon any policy adopted by any Government in that matter. It bristled with international complications, difficulties, and dangers. Many and serious as have been the international problems which have divided the great and small Powers since the end of the war, I daresay that no one will dispute that this problem of Palestine was as great, as difficult and as dangerous as any. What has happened?

For the first time the United Nations have registered a success. I am not begging the question of what the ultimate result may be; no one knows; but I say that for the first time the United Nations organisation, on which the peace and future of mankind rests, has been able, in a very difficult and dangerous situation, to reach an agreement which was virtually a unanimous agreement. People have said "No, do not regard this as a United Nations' triumph." My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes), who accused my hon. Friend the Member for West Leicester (Mr. Janner) last night of making a speech full of fallacies, but who himself is the prince of paradox, suggested that this was the end—I have not his exact words in front of me—of the United Nations. Why? Because he disagrees with what they did?

How many times have we heard my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich complain of the rule of unanimity in the Security Council? When Russia could not agree with all the other nations and imposed the veto that showed how wicked an enemy of international democracy the U.S.S.R. was. But my hon. Friend reserves the right of veto to himself, to his own, individual, self, and because he does not agree with the solution, says that because the United Nations came to that view they have done something wrong. Presumably, it would have been the salvation of the United Nations if they had failed to agree, and had left the situation as it was when it was presented to them—

Mr. Stokes (Ipswich): Perhaps my hon. Friend will study my speech, and acquaint himself of the fact that what I said was that the United Nations, in arriving at this decision, under American pressure,

and in an unfair manner, had committed political suicide.

Mr. Silverman: I suppose that if a man commits suicide, political or otherwise, he dies? What I said of my hon. Friend's speech was correct. I am coming to the reasons he advanced for that view in a few moments, but first let us agree that he thought that when the United Nations with virtual unanimity, had agreed on a plan, in this difficult and dangerous situation, they had committed political suicide.

Mr. Stokes: That is not what I said.

Mr. Silverman: My hon. Friend said there was a lot of pressure and bargaining. I do not know, but what did he expect would take place when the matter was referred to the United Nations? Did he expect that others in the world would do otherwise than Great Britain did, and try to reconcile conflicting views and forget altogether their own national interests? Would he expect all others to do that while Great Britain reserved the right to put her national interests first? What nonsense. They all looked at their own national interests and their own place in a difficult and dangerous world. Why not? But when all allowance is made for that, what was the result? American pressure? Five of the South American States, who are usually regarded as belonging to the American *bloc*, abstained from voting in this matter in spite of American pressure, if there was any. For the first time, the American *bloc* was broken; five South American States did otherwise than the United States. Is that an example of greater pressure than before, or less?

That is one side; let us come to the other. The Slav *bloc*, which had always maintained a united front on issues of this kind—"ganging up" on the one side or the other, as some of my hon. Friends call it—showed no united front. Yugoslavia, a very important member of that *bloc*, abstained. Of course, there were reasons for abstaining one way and the other way, and reasons for voting against and for. But we do not look for reasons when considering the result. In politics, the most dangerous thing is to reject a good result because the motives of some people who supported that result are disliked: not that I see any grounds for

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

such suspicions myself. So far from this being an example of agreement reached by an unusual degree of political chicanery and pressure of various kinds, there was, on the contrary, less than ever, and agreement resulted for the first time in the history of the United Nations. Does anybody doubt it?

What about the British Commonwealth of Nations? Every one of our Dominions voted for this solution except Great Britain. Great Britain was the only member of the British Commonwealth of Nations who abstained from taking any part at all in that decision.

Mr. M. Philips Price (Forest of Dean):
What about Pakistan?

Mr. Silverman: I am coming to the Muslim States in a moment. I say that with the exception of Great Britain and, if my hon. Friend wishes, Pakistan, every member of the British Commonwealth of Nations voted for this solution. When my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich says, "American pressure," does he mean that there was pressure on New Zealand, Australia, or Canada? What nonsense, and my hon. Friend knows that it is nonsense.

Mr. Stokes: If my hon. Friend will study my speech he will see that I mentioned five nations which he has not referred to yet.

Mr. Silverman: I cannot mention all the nations at once. At the moment I have got this far, that American pressure resulted in this: that the U.S.S.R. voted for partition; is that American pressure? That Canada did—American pressure? That Australia did—American pressure? That New Zealand did—American pressure?

Mr. Stokes: There was some pressure there, yes.

Mr. Silverman: Five of the American *bloc* abstained. Was that American pressure, calling upon them to abstain? No, Sir. I do not want to prolong this part of the matter too far, but if we look at the voting we get the very remarkable result that, except for the Moslem States who surely cannot be regarded as impartial in the matter—they were parties to the dispute though they sat in the judicial tribunal and had a direct interest in it——

Mr. Price: Was Hindustan a Moslem State?

Mr. Silverman: I still say that Hindustan, which, after the Act of Parliament that we passed a little while ago, is not a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, while Pakistan is—[HON. MEMBERS: “India.”] I meant to say “India.” If we leave out the Moslem States, who were parties to the dispute and had a direct interest in its result and who, nevertheless, voted against partition, naturally from their own point of view—I am not complaining—the only nations in the whole wide world who voted against this solution were Cuba and Greece. That is a remarkable result, a very remarkable result.

One is entitled to say that, leaving out the abstainers, who after all do not count on either side, and leaving out those nations who had a direct private interest in the result, this solution by the United Nations was reached with virtual unanimity. It is idle as well as mischievous to say in those circumstances that the decision has no authority because it was the result of somebody's pressure. One ought to take some pride and pleasure in the fact that at last the deadlock between the two most powerful nations of the postwar world has been broken, and that, under the joint leadership of the Soviet Union and the United States, unfortunately without our participation, most of the nations of the world have followed, in order to get a plan and a policy upon which the future handling of the problem of Palestine can be based.

So far from surrounding that very important incident of postwar history with funereal speeches, gloom and misery, we ought to have some pride and pleasure in it and to regard it as the first triumph of our United Nations organisation. Let us look at the result. People say that partition is a very bad solution. What other solution was possible? Nobody ever recommended any other solution.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Creech Jones): There was a minority report.

Mr. Silverman: Yes, there was a minority report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Perhaps I might give it its full title, because I dislike conglomerated initials. That minority report was produced, but was

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
 Reference: **FO 371/61797**

102

1341

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1342

[Mr. Silverman.]

there anybody who regarded it as workable? Nobody in the Foreign Office or in the Colonial Office regarded it as workable. The principal advisers to the right hon. Gentleman did not think it was workable. It had no friends or supporters anywhere. It was a totally unworkable, unrealistic thing. There had been, at one time, another unanimous recommendation, other than partition. My hon. Friend the Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) was a member of the Commission and so was the hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller). They indeed reached a unanimous series of recommendations, within a unitary Palestine, a little while ago. It was unanimous, but it was rejected by His Majesty's Government.

Mr. Creech Jones: It was rejected by the Jews.

Mr. Silverman: I do not know. My right hon. Friend interrupts me to say that the Report was rejected by the Jews. I am not considering now the attitude of either party to the dispute, but I do not think it is quite true that it was rejected by the Jews; but be it so, for the purposes of the argument. I am not concerned with that. I am saying that it was rejected by His Majesty's Government, and rejected by the Prime Minister in this House almost before the ink was dry on the paper, and before anybody could have any chance to say whether they would accept it or reject it. My information is that the Arabs would have accepted it, if it had been firmly presented.

Mr. Stokes: No.

Mr. Silverman: My hon. Friend again says "No." Very well, then. Whichever way we have it, it was the only alternative solution ever offered by anybody impartial, looking at the matter judicially, after having examined the evidence culled from the two nations and from many quarters. It was a unanimous recommendation of a solution for a unitary State. It was rejected, let us say, by everybody, by my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich for the Arabs and by my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Government. I take the word of my right hon. Friend that the Jews rejected it. So everybody rejected it,

and that solution was not open. Apart from that, what other decision could the United Nations have reached? If there is one, if the Government knew of one or the Opposition knew of one, or if anybody knew of one, was it not their plain duty to put it forward to the United Nations and to let the United Nations consider the suggestion on its merits? Nobody ventured to do it. Nobody had sufficient confidence in any other solution.

The present solution has held the field since 1937 when it was first recommended by a British commission of inquiry under Lord Peel. My hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. T. Reid), who spoke yesterday, said he did not like this solution. He did not like it in 1937. He was a member of the so-called fact-finding commission, which went out to Palestine after the Peel Commission had recommended partition, to see whether it could find workable boundaries. He has come here, and I have heard him boast since: "I killed partition." His view yesterday was therefore hardly an impartial one.

Mr. Stokes: I do not suppose the hon. Member's is either.

Mr. Silverman: I am doing my best. I would rather have a good solution of this problem than a bad solution. I am prepared to consider any solution. I certainly do not like partition. I was against it in 1937, and I am against it now, in principle. People talk as though partition was a Jewish solution. It is nothing of the kind. Partition is a compromise solution, a very severe compromise for the Jewish State to make; but that is not my point. Suppose there is nobody impartial in the matter. Suppose everybody rejects the solution for prejudiced and partial reasons. Be it so.

What else was the United Nations to do? What other plan was before them? What other solution could they have reached? Let it be said further that not merely was this solution proposed in 1937, but there was a period—was it in July of last year?—before ever this matter was referred to the United Nations at all, when it was being canvassed in this House and in the newspapers. Everybody decided that though it was not a good solution and there were obvious injustices

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

and even more obvious dangers involved in it, nevertheless partition offered the only practicable hope of any solution at all. Every newspaper in this country said so—"The Times," the "Telegraph," the "Manchester Guardian" and the "News Chronicle." I cannot recite them all, but I cannot think of any newspaper that did not commit itself before this went to the United Nations; that is, committed itself to the view that partition offered the only hope of a way out. What we are looking for is not for ways out, but hopes for a way out—something on which to base a policy with a hope of it meeting with some kind of success.

Earl Winterton (Horsham): May I draw the hon. Member's attention to an historical fact? There has been no hope of any way out without bloodshed since the Government of the day in their infinite unwisdom, committed themselves to the Balfour Declaration on the one hand, and on the other hand gave orders to some of us in that country to make promises to the Arabs which were in conflict with that decision.

Mr. Silverman: What would the noble Lord do about it now?

Earl Winterton: It is not my business.

Mr. Silverman: It is our business. How can it be said now that this ought never to have happened?

Earl Winterton: I say that these conflicting declarations should not have been made, and that every Government has been cursed with that ever since.

Mr. Silverman: The noble Lord need not burst any blood vessels to convince me that anyone who makes conflicting promises and is then called upon to fulfil them will find himself in trouble. Certainly a large part of the trouble arises out of the conflicting promises which were made, or at least the conflicting interpretations which have been placed upon them. But how does it help to go on repeating that? The thing has happened, and we are in this position as the result. What we are considering is how to get out of it. It is no good repeating that the Balfour Declaration or the McMahon letters were wrong. That does not help us now. For 30 years people have been coming in and out of Palestine on the basis and on the strength of these conflicting promises. The question is how

74 A 7

we can now meet that situation, not with complete justice to both sides, because that cannot be done. The question is how we can, somehow or other, work out a plan which will offer the greatest common measure of justice to both sides. Everyone who has looked at that question from 1937 onwards has come to the conclusion that the only thing that can be done, since Palestine cannot be given to the Arabs, and since it cannot be given to the Jews, is to divide it between them. There is really no other way out, and everyone knows it.

Earl Winterton: No.

Mr. Silverman: There it is, "No" again. With every proposal we hear the word "No". With every suggestion it is "No", and when the question is asked, "will you advance some alternative solution of your own", again we hear "No". There cannot be a solution by one side having its way. Let me say this to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley), with whose speech I found myself largely in agreement. I am bound to say that he was a little ungracious when he taunted the Government with all the troubles they had caused by their handling of the Palestine situation during the past two and a half years. I have repeatedly said that myself in this House, but it is not for the right hon. Gentleman to say it.

What troubles did the Government get into in Palestine? They got into trouble in Palestine because of their mistaken belief that they were bound to go on carrying out the policy imposed by Mr. Chamberlain's Government in 1938. It is not for the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Government were wrong. He talked about not imposing a solution by force which is not agreed upon by both parties. That is a tautology in itself. If a thing is agreed by both sides, why is there need to impose it by force? In 1938, the solution was imposed by force. The White Paper solution was imposed by force, and this party said that they would not be bound by it. The solution was wrong, and the Mandates Commission said that it was not in accordance with the Mandate; everyone gave notice that they would resist it.

The trouble this Government has been in has been due to their endeavour to continue to apply, in the absence of an

103

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

104

1345

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1346

[Mr. Silverman.]

agreement, the unworkable and unjust policy imposed in 1938 in the vastly changed conditions of 1945, 1946 and 1947. In 1938 we had not had 6 million Jews massacred in Europe. The world was different in 1938, and if the policy was wrong in 1938, it was a hundredfold more wrong in 1945. I do not wish to deal with that, but merely to say that it is not for the Opposition to complain about the Government's handling of the situation in Palestine. They have only done what they have been told to do, and have continued the policy which was nothing more than Mr. Chamberlain's policy of appeasement at Munich.

I was relieved to hear my right hon. Friend say yesterday that the Government accepted the solution now offered. I was equally pleased to hear the hon. and learned Member for Daventry say, on behalf of the Opposition, that he accepted the solution proffered by the United Nations. If we do accept this solution, let us accept it generously, not grudgingly, not half-heartedly and not regretfully. The Government are perfectly entitled to say that they will not implement that policy alone. The Government are perfectly right to say that they will do no more than their fair, proper and legitimate share. I do not think, however, that they are entitled to say that they will have no part or lot in it, but will merely give a formal, verbal acquiescence on the United Nations decision. They are called upon to do a little more than that.

When they talk about preserving law and order in the meantime, it is, I think, a reasonable question to ask what law and order they are going to preserve. Whose law and order? Is it the law and order which flows from the United Nations decision, or is it the law and order which has been applied under the White Paper since 1945, or since 1937. How long is it possible to allow a large community to defend itself, and still pretend that the institutions by which it defends itself are illegal? Can we really do that? How long can we continue this nonsense that the Haganah is some sort of infernal conspiracy? An answer was given the other day by the Under-Secretary to the effect that the Haganah is not "recognised." There was a time during the war when we were glad enough to

recognise it, and I see no reason in the world, when we hand over functions to be performed by it, that we should hesitate to recognise it now.

Let us take our part in a United Nations Force to guard frontiers, if guarding frontiers is necessary, or, if we will not do that, and if we will not take any part or lot in it at all, then I agree with those who have spoken on the opposite side of the House that we should get out as quickly as we can. But I would rather we did not do that. I would rather we did it with dignity, and not regard it as a failure and not look at it with regret. This is no failure: dangerous as the situation is, this is no failure: this is triumph. What else did we go into Palestine for? Has it really been so dismal? In 1917 Palestine was part of the Middle Eastern desert, as it had been for 20 centuries; today, it is the coveted vineyard of the world.

It is said that there are 500,000 more Jews in Palestine today than there were at the beginning of this great adventure. So indeed there are, and there are 500,000 more Arabs, too. The whole country has been transformed. Its level of civilisation is 50 times higher than it has been at any time in the last 20 centuries, and it is still growing, and everybody has shared in it. The standard of living of the Arabs in Palestine is far higher, not merely than it has ever been before but also than in any other part of the Middle East. This is not failure, this is success. We looked, even in those days, to the time when we would retire from the country and hand it over to its inhabitants as an independent State. All that is happening now is that whereas everybody hoped we could hand it over to one independent State, we are handing it over to two independent States because it works better that way. What tragedy is there in that?

All the Middle East is desert. It is said that the Arab is the son of the desert. That is not so. The Arab is the father of the desert. In ancient times and in medieval times all this land was rich and fertile. It was as fertile on the Southern side of the Mediterranean as the similar land in similar climatic conditions on the Northern side of the Mediterranean. And so it can be again. So it will be again. I agree with one thing said by my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich, that what

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

the Arabs dislike is not Jews coming in, but Europeans coming in. They fear that, somehow or other, this is the spear-head of a new European colonising invasion of Arab lands. They need not fear. The Jews will not repeat all the social and economic mistakes of Europe in the Middle East. They will not exploit anybody. They converted the desert of Palestine into garden land by the labour of their own hands, by their own efforts—young students, doctors, lawyers, engineers, rabbis, going out into malaria-infested districts and converting them, at the cost of their lives into places that grew produce and flowers, grapes, oranges, grapefruit, and all the other things that make the country now a garden spot of the Middle East.

And what has been done in Palestine can be done by the Arabs themselves under proper leadership—their own leadership—all over the Middle East. It cannot be done by the feudal landlords whom my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich prefers alone in the Middle East out of all the world. Nowhere else would he defend the landlordism that he defends in Palestine. No, there is a social revolution there and, out of it is coming wealth, out of it is being won back into civilisation the 20 centuries-old desert, and what has been done in Palestine is only an example of what can be done all over the Middle East. We are beginning here, not a retreat, but a great advance to a new era of human civilisation and, for my part, I am proud and happy that my own race will take a leading part in that great collective adventure.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Thomas Moore (Ayr Burghs): The House is, of course, aware of the deep interest and concern which the hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) takes in this matter, but I failed to follow some of his arguments. He did not agree with partition and yet he argued for partition, he did not like partition and yet the whole point of his speech was in favour of partition—

Mr. S. Silverman: I prefer it to anarchy.

Sir T. Moore: Well, that may be an alternative solution, but I want to make a few suggestions which will show that there is at any rate one other alternative solution. However, I will not follow the

hon. Member in the various points he made. In considering this vexing and troublesome and, indeed, tragic problem of Palestine, my mind is inevitably driven back to almost similar conditions which existed in Ireland some quarter of a century ago. An almost similar situation to that which the Government of today have to face had to be faced by the Government of 25 years ago. The size of the territory concerned is not dissimilar, the number of British troops involved is somewhat similar, and I hope to show that other conditions also are alike.

I should explain that I am using this as an example because I believe it may lead us to the alternative solution which I would like the House to consider, if it is not too late. I was sent to Dublin as a staff officer when the rebellion broke out in 1916, and I saw that tragic tale unfolded. I then was sent back in 1920, when the "troubles" became more acute, and so I had some little experience. During that second period, two incidents occurred which I think have a bearing on our present difficulties. At a conference held in Dublin in 1921 it was decided that the rebel force could not be subdued unless some far greater military operation was undertaken, and that operation was not considered advisable by Mr. Lloyd George or the British Government of that day, who were unwilling to undertake the further obligations involved. The second incident was a confession made to me by the rebel leader, Michael Collins, sometime afterwards. He said that when the Treaty negotiations—almost exactly the position we are in today—were undertaken, the rebels were reduced to an insignificant number of rifles and revolvers and still less ammunition.

Why, therefore, it might be asked should this vast British Army—supported by a powerful British Government, exalted with recent victory, with easy bases in England from which to draw supplies and support—give way, and why should they be unable to crush this insignificant rebel force, ill-armed, hopelessly out-numbered, hopelessly equipped and with no reserves on which to draw? The answer is simple: it was because the rebel movement was backed by the vast majority of Southern Irish people. Every hotel, every pub, every club had its underground movement, as we call it now, where true information was given to the

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

solution, and does not lead to a prosperous community, or a prosperous economy. So, in my last word, I ask the Colonial Secretary to take a fresh view of this decision reached by the United Nations. I am not going into the reasons why it was reached, and what pressure was brought on various states to take the decision, or to reverse their previous decision, but I hope he will find some method on the lines I have indicated of bringing peace to this torn and tortured land.

11.57 a.m.

Mr. M. Philips Price (Forest of Dean): I am sorry my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson & Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) is not in his place, because I have a few bones to pick with him. He devoted a great part of his speech with great forensic eloquence, of which he is a master, to what I may term very special pleading. He twitted us first with having no alternative to this plan. "What can you suggest? There is no other plan," he seemed to say. I agree with the hon. and gallant Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir T. Moore) that there is an alternative along the lines of what is sometimes called the Morrison plan, the federal plan. That may be difficult to carry out in the heated atmosphere prevailing at the moment, but let us keep that plan in our minds. I believe that there is an alternative, and that is my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne. He said we cannot get a solution by one side having its own way. Indeed, I agree, and that is just why I disagree with this partition proposal, for it is one side having its own way.

Mr. Mikardo (Reading): Which side?

Mr. Price: The Zionists' side is getting all its wants. It has not got all Transjordan and Syria—

Mr. Janner (Leicester, West): Will my hon. Friend be good enough, in making that statement to explain why he suggests that the Zionists or the Jews in Palestine have it all their own way, when they have conceded the question of Transjordan—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."]—Oh, yes, that was intended by the Mandate—and half of Palestine, which is three-quarters, or more, than the amount intended?

74 A 11

Mr. Price: I presume they have realised the full effect of *reculer pour mieux sortir*, withdrawing to spring again.

Mr. Turner-Samuels (Gloucester): Would the hon. Gentleman say if it is his solution that the Jews should get nothing at all?

Mr. Price: I would be obliged to the hon. and learned Member for Gloucester (Mr. Turner-Samuels) if he would allow me to make my own speech. My hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne is fearful that, in the process of our withdrawal from Palestine, we may not maintain law and order in the way in which he thinks we should. I know we have a very difficult task in withdrawing our troops from Palestine, but I maintain that we ought to do it with the utmost fairness to both sides. My hon. Friend talks about us having a force ready to prevent an Arab invasion coming in from outside. I agree, but I think we ought also to have a force ready to prevent Jewish invasion by illegal immigration from outside, too. Does he agree to that? [AN HON. MEMBER: "We have."] I am not so sure. I hope the Zionists will not, in the interim period, try to force the issue by illegal immigration, but that it will stop from now onwards until our troops are withdrawn.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend thought fit to make a disgraceful and ignorant aspersion on the Arab world by describing them as the "fathers of the desert." I will not waste the time of the House in refuting an argument of that kind. My hon. Friend became a little more definite later on, when he cast that aspersion on the Arab world as being feudal landlord-ridden. There, again, he shows grave ignorance. I was in Palestine two years ago, and I saw the Zionist colonies, and I also did what most people of his point of view do not do. I went to the Arab villages and looked to find that feudal landlordism to which he referred. The facts are that all along the coast of Palestine, Syria and the Lebanon, there are no large landlords. There are small landlords owning a tract of land, part of which they let and part of which they work themselves. I went to an Arab farm in the Jordan Valley, half of which was worked and half of which was let out. The big feudal landlords are not here, but far away, and no doubt in time there will be reforms there. Here, the country is behind the Western world, but there

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Mr. Price.]
is a great Arab awakening going on and it is about time that the hon. Member for Nelson and Colne realised it.

I pass on to more general views. During yesterday's Debate, some hon. Members, who support the idea of the U.N.O. decision, gave the impression that it is our duty to stay and carry out that U.N.O. decision or to assist in doing so. My hon. Friend the Member for Luton (Mr. Warbey) produced arguments for having an international police force in which, I understood him to say, we ought to be compelled to join. While he was speaking, I thought that it seemed to him that man was made for laws and not laws for man. It is not enough for us to hand over Palestine in good order to U.N.O. We must help to do the job, however much we feel it to be wrong and unjust. My hon. Friend the Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) wanted, under the aegis of U.N.O., the small nations to be organised to provide a force to carry out this partition plan. I am sure that the Swiss and the Norwegians will be thankful to him for the suggestion that they should pull chestnuts out of the fire for Zionists. All the hon. Members who have spoken in this sense seemed to think that, once a decision is taken by U.N.O., we have no right to a view of our own. This is a very serious matter, because it lies at the base of political democracy.

The League of Nations failed because there was not sufficient cohesion amongst its members, or agreement on essential issues, and I say that U.N.O. will fail, too, if it comes to decisions which are violently partisan and which force minorities who feel strongly on these issues to take part in carrying out those decisions. It is grossly unfair to suggest that, by refusing to help to carry out the partition decision on Palestine, we are wrecking U.N.O. as Germany and Italy wrecked the League of Nations before the war.

Mr. Henry Usborne (Birmingham, Acock's Green): Since the hon. Member for Luton is not in his place, I think I might say, since I heard his speech, that what he was advocating was the use of an internationally mobilised force, a U.N.O. police force, not one in which there would be a British contingent, but a force composed of individuals recruited

by U.N.O., and that is very substantially different.

Mr. Price: I am sorry if I misunderstood my right hon. Friend the Member for Luton, and, if that is what he said, I admit that it is a much more reasonable proposition, but I should strongly resent this country being compelled to take part in a plan of this kind. A minority has no right to obstruct a decision of U.N.O., but it has a right to refuse to carry out what in its conscience it feels to be unjust, and failure to recognise this will wreck U.N.O., as the League of Nations was wrecked before. Let hon. Members who advise that course go down to their constituencies and tell their electors that their young men ought to be sent out there to enforce that decision of U.N.O. I know what the reply would be in my constituency.

The statement of the Colonial Secretary yesterday has done much to make the situation clear as to the rôle of the British Government and the U.N.O. Assembly. It was an impressive story of untiring work to try to bring about a peaceful solution to this intractable problem. I am sorry, however, that the impression has been created in the Arab countries that the British Government, at the U.N.O. Conference, had no policy and was weakly acquiescent in everything that was said and done there. I should like it to have been made plain to the world that they regard this partition scheme as iniquitous and unjust.

Mr. Mikardo: It was.

Mr. Price: The Colonial Secretary has said—and I am paraphrasing him—that, having asked for advice, we could not give advice. That is true, but at least we could have said what we think is the best solution, having regard to our great experience in administering Palestine for the past few years.

Mr. Mikardo: We did.

Mr. Price: I have no doubt that the British delegation at Lake Success said, in private, many things that were unexceptionable, but my point is whether that will be understood in the bazaars of Cairo and Baghdad, the oases of Saudi Arabia and the hill villages of the Lebanon. I have seen and have felt the Arab reactions to our policy over recent months. In general, I can tell the House that our refusal to

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

110

1357

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1358

[Mr. Price.]

quite enough for my hon. Friend besides, I am not going to be tempted to get out of Order. There are certain Rules of this House which prevent me from making certain statements.

Mr. Levy: The hon. Gentleman should not go halfway.

Mr. Turner-Samuels: On a point of Order. When an hon. Member makes allegations, Mr. Speaker, is it out of Order for him to provide proof of such allegations?

Mr. Speaker: I am not quite sure what the point is, but I think that, if the hon. Member likes to say that he is not prepared to disclose the source of his information, he is quite in Order in saying so.

Mr. Turner-Samuels: Further to that point of Order. Does that mean, Mr. Speaker, that an hon. Member might say that, whereas he would be in Order if he made the allegations, he would be out of Order if he gave the proof of those allegations?

Mr. Price: I think I might be out of Order if I made certain statements about the person about whom these statements are made. I intend to leave it at that.

Mr. Stokes: The President of the United States.

Mr. Price: One thing which impressed me during my visit to the Middle East was the vital interest which this country has in maintaining good relations with the Arab world. We are dependent on their consent and co-operation with all the peoples of the Middle East for any position, political and economic, which we hold out there. I refer particularly to economic developments and regeneration which are going on all over the Middle East, and particularly in the Arab lands. I conceive it to be our duty, now that Empire in the old sense of the word has gone, to be guide, philosopher, and friend to these States, many of them young ones, some, like the Arab States, struggling out of the Middle Ages, others like India and Pakistan who have grown up under our tutelage, and still others who, like the ancient Kingdom of Persia, are ready to work with them. We can be their helper and guide. I feel that rôle ought to be played by us, and that is why I feel

74 A 14

all the more bitterly the catastrophe of this decision over Palestine, and the irresponsibility of the Congress of the United States in this matter.

While I hope that the Arabs will, in spite of grave provocation, do nothing desperate, I am satisfied that this whole scheme is unworkable. Has anyone in this House studied it? Villages will be separated from their cultivated lands and towns from their food areas—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Yes, hear, hear. [HON. MEMBERS: "We are agreeing with you."] I am sorry. Ports will be separated from their hinterland. Sixty per cent. of the area of Palestine will go to the Jews, who are 33 per cent. of the population today. Half a million Arabs will be put in the Jewish State, and only 20,000 Jews in the Arab State. It is obviously a deliberate attempt to make it impossible for the Arab State to live and to put Palestine under Zionist domination—and later, if possible, to extend that to Syria and Transjordan.

I have never liked the partition, and I accept it only as a second best. I much prefer what is known as the Morrison plan—autonomous areas of Jews and Arabs with a Jewish-Arab federal government at the centre. That pre-supposes a certain degree of readiness to co-operate, which unfortunately, at the moment, seems to be hard to obtain, but I think we ought, even if we cannot do it now, as soon as possible to declare that this is the only really workable solution. In spite of the terrible impasse in which we now are, we must continue to work for good relations between Jews and Gentiles—I do not say Zionists—I say Jews and Gentiles. The possibility of the horror of racialism getting abroad, with the state of the world as it is today, is too terrible to contemplate. If ever that does happen then Hitler will indeed have won the war.

Meanwhile, at all costs we must extract our forces and stores and ensure that the evacuation is carried out safely, and that we keep law and order in those regions where we actually are. It is essential that we do nothing during our evacuation to favour in any way this disgraceful partition. It is, in any case, unworkable and any period of chaos which may supervene—which I hope will not, and that the Arabs will keep their heads—will show the unworkability of this plan. Then, perhaps, an opportunity may come to put

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

forward a sensible alternative. It will be the time then for the federal scheme, because men's hearts will not stay forever at white heat. Zionist imperialism will meet its Waterloo, and then, on its ruins, reason can reign supreme.

12.24 p.m.

Sir Waldron Smithers (Orpington): May I say how much I appreciated and admired the speech of the hon. Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. Philips Price). It was a typical House of Commons speech. He spoke from his heart and with sincerity. The hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) said that the position in Palestine had been desperate for a long time. It has been getting increasingly desperate for 2,000 years and I want to put forward something which I hope will mitigate what I think will be a terrible catastrophe in Palestine.

I am glad to see the Foreign Secretary in his place, because, if he has the time to listen to my few remarks, I think he can help to carry out the policy I am trying to indicate, which is this. Even if Palestine is to be partitioned, and that seems inevitable, I do make a plea for an international enclave for Jerusalem and surrounding districts. I know that the responsibility now does not rest entirely with His Majesty's Government. It is a matter for U.N.O. But we are still members of U.N.O. and I would ask that the strongest efforts should be made to try and implement the policy which I am venturing to outline. The Oxford Dictionary defines "enclave" as "a piece of territory entirely shut in by foreign Dominions."

It is about the enclave round Jerusalem that I want to speak. If the Colonial Secretary and the Foreign Secretary would be good enough to look up the letter of the Archbishop of York in "The Times" of Saturday, 6th December, on the subject of the enclave of greater Jerusalem, I think they would find summarised what I am about to say.

I wish to make three short quotations to bring into perspective what I want to put before the House. These quotations relate to the boundaries or the proposed boundaries of the enclave. The first is by the Palestine Royal Commission of 1937. They said:

"An enclave should be demarcated extending from a point north of Jerusalem to a

point south of Bethlehem, and access to the sea should be provided by a corridor extending to the north of the main road and to the south of the railway, including the towns of Lydda and Ramle and terminating at Jaffa."

That is at page 381 of the Report.

The second quotation is from the partition Commission of 1938 who

"(1) moved the northern boundary to the north of Ramallah to include landing ground for aircraft at Qalandiya and the road from Ramallah to Latrun regarded as an essential military line of communication for the defence of the Enclave."

and

"(2) Widened the corridor between Jerusalem and Jaffa, and more particularly between Jaffa and the Jewish State because the Commission felt that with the over-riding necessity of keeping Jerusalem and Bethlehem inviolate and of ensuring free and safe access to them for all the world—"

and these words are very important—

"the necessity of protecting the Holy Places must over-ride the needs of the Jewish State, and if the Mandatory were to be entrusted with the protection of the Holy Places it was essential that the Enclave should have boundaries capable of being defended."

The third short quotation comes from the majority plan of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine accepted by the United Nations Assembly:

"The city of Jerusalem shall include within its borders the present municipality of Jerusalem, plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which is Abu Dis, the most southern Bethlehem, the most western Ain Karim, the most northern Shu'fat."

That is the geographical outline I wish to give.

Now we come to the administration. The Royal Commission of 1937 said this:

"The Royal Commission regards the Mandate of a Jerusalem enclave as a sacred trust of civilisation—"

That is why I am pleading that if Palestine is to be partitioned, there should be this international enclave of the Holy Places. The Report of the Commission goes on to say:

"—a trust on behalf not merely of the peoples of Palestine but of multitudes of other lands to whom Jerusalem and Bethlehem, one or both, are Holy Places, and all the inhabitants of the enclave should stand on an equal footing."

It then says:

"The U.N.O. majority plan envisages the administration of the City of Jerusalem as placed under the international trusteeship system by means of a trusteeship agreement designating the United Nations as the administrative authority. The Governor of Jerusalem—"

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

112

1361

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1362

[Sir W. Smithers.]

this, again, is a very important point—

“is to be appointed by the trusteeship council of the United Nations. He will be neither Arab nor Jew, nor a citizen of the Palestine State, nor at the time of his appointment a resident in Jerusalem. The protection of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in the City of Jerusalem is to be entrusted to a special police force, the members of which shall be recruited outside Palestine and shall be neither Jew nor Arab.”

There now comes a big “but” to which I would respectfully draw the attention of the Foreign Secretary. There has been a plea for the inclusion of the Jewish part of Jerusalem in the Jewish State. This plea was brought to the attention of the Partition Commission and dealt with by them fully in Chapter 9 of their Report. They made it clear that political and religious objections to such a plan were even more insuperable than the actual administrative difficulties. According to the letter written by the Archbishop of Canterbury, to which I have referred, this plea has now been revived, and representatives of the Jewish Agency are claiming that only the ancient City of Jerusalem should be under international control. As the Archbishop points out in his letter, not only would this mean that a large number of long-established Christian churches, schools, hospitals and institutions would be within the Jewish State, but for the sake of the “peace of Jerusalem” and the security of the Holy Places, it is vital that the Holy City and its immediate neighbourhood should be under international control.

There is a further important point which applies to all the monotheistic religions. It is not only Christian opinion which is to be considered in this matter. As was pointed out in Chapter 9 of the Palestine Partition Commission Report, Jerusalem is sacred to Moslems as well as Jews and Christians. The whole idea of limiting the territory under international control to the old city is fantastic. It would be impossible to administer the trust under such conditions. There seems to be a danger that the need to emphasise the sacred nature of the Jerusalem enclave, as apart from a mere neutral territory or a museum piece, may be lost sight of. It is not only a matter of guardianship of the specified places in the Royal Commission's Report, but the establishment of a permanent Holy Place for the adherents of the three great mono-

theistic faiths throughout the world, because Jerusalem as a Holy City is as important to religious-minded Jews as to religious-minded Moslems and Christians, and the increasing commercialisation of the Holy City strikes at the heart of our hope to form a Jerusalem from which the word of God may go forth yet again to an exhausted and dying world.

One of the methods I would suggest of implementing what I have tried to explain, is this. One great deterrent to crime in the Holy City might be if it was known that the punishment for any deliberate act of violence would be banishment for life from the Holy City, as the person who committed that deliberate act of violence would be unworthy to live within its precincts. Here is a chance to provide some centre for healing and possibly reconstruction and revival of religious thought, not only in the Holy Land itself but throughout the world.

I wish to refer to the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller) who, I am sorry, is not in his place, because his speech was one of those which went to the heart of this trouble and impending catastrophe in Palestine. He referred to the events of 2,000 years ago and expressed the hope that we should hear for ever over the wireless the bells of Bethlehem at Christmas. I want to pay a personal tribute to the hon. and learned Member because I think his remarks were influenced by his dear old father who was a respected and loved Member of this House. “The Times” in its leader this morning refers to the danger of turning the Holy City into a cockpit. I believe it will be a cockpit, because these days have been foretold.

There are chaotic and anarchic conditions all over the world, and it is possible that the battle between good and evil will be fought out in the cockpit of Jerusalem. It will be holy war. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke), whose speech was a major contribution to this Debate, said that the question was much bigger than Palestine, and that the seeds of the next world war of power politics were being sown. The conditions in Palestine in the coming months may easily and, I think, will provide a harvest for the atheistic and materialistic

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Soviet Communist propaganda which is threatening to engulf the world.

I would make one final appeal to the Foreign Secretary and the Colonial Secretary: Do let us try to keep Jerusalem and the surrounding country with a corridor to Jaffa and the sea. Let us try and keep those places free from desecration. History is repeating itself.

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitudes, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

It looks to me as if that saying is about to be fulfilled.

12.39 p.m.

Major Vernon (Dulwich): For the first time since I have been in this House I have found some measure of agreement with what the hon. Member for Orpington (Sir W. Smithers) has said. I think his last phrase was most peculiarly apt, that in the rapid retreat from Palestine which has been advocated by hon. Members yesterday and today, there is a parallel with the Biblical reference of washing our hands and keeping ourselves free and clear of this trouble. The other feature of his speech with which I agree was that he was putting international loyalty superior to local and national loyalty and even superior to religious loyalty, and in that I agree with him.

Sir W. Smithers: I do not want to be misunderstood. I do not want to put international loyalty against national loyalty. As things are at present we cannot help ourselves. What I was appealing for was international control over the Jerusalem enclave.

Major Vernon: I am sorry the hon. Member did not agree with me when I was trying to agree with him, but we will leave the matter there.

It was rather the procedure mentioned by the hon. and gallant Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir T. Moore) which encouraged me to intervene. He said it was a very well known military fact that armies are often beaten when they fight peoples. Armies are designed to fight similarly armed other armies. There are many examples in history—the Irish was one—where the tank and the artillery were no match for a united people, and that has

74 A 17

been our trouble in Palestine. There have been shops set alight, disturbances and troubles here and there, and tanks have rumbled into the streets and the whole military machine has been set in motion. It was just fantastic; they could not get at the seat of the trouble because they were not the right apparatus to deal with that kind of disturbance. That is one of the simple facts of the case.

The hon. Member for Ayr Burghs and many other Members have advocated a very rapid retreat from Palestine. The Colonial Secretary said it was the intention of the Government to get out of Palestine as quickly as possible and that is a military decision. If you have to shift so many hundred men, so many tons of stores, and you have certain roads, vehicles and ships available, the whole process is one of arithmetic and it is an arithmetical problem which is connected with this operation. I understood from what the Colonial Secretary said that that was the problem. It is not a political problem of getting out as quickly as we can because no one can see the political future very far ahead, and for Members to urge us to get out quicker than is possible is to assume things. You must expect to have things like roads being blocked and your timetable out of order in these areas, and I do not understand what is in Members' minds in trying to speed up this operation.

In these difficulties which face us—and I would be the last to belittle them—there are two methods of approach. One is to steer the way through intermediate obstacles. Another method is to look far ahead and pick out something to steer for, find an intermediate point and approach from that way. What is our ultimate objective? Reading the speeches of Parliamentary spokesmen all over the world, we find them saying that world government is the end they have in mind; they even say that from the backward area of the United States Senate. The Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have all said that our object is world government. How are we going to achieve it? We must always keep our ultimate object in mind as we try to solve the intermediate problem. The United Nations is the intermediate step.

Are these measures we are discussing today likely to strengthen the United

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Mr. Dodds-Parker (Banbury): I am sure the House will agree in general with the hon. and gallant Member for Dulwich (Major Vernon) in his suggestion that some sort of federal authority would have satisfied many in this House—possibly a majority—rather than the present position where we see Palestine cut in half, and I am very glad he has taken this opportunity once more to mention the project of world government. How far ahead in the future it may be we do not know, but many people see it as the ultimate solution to many of our problems. I am not sure whether I agree with the statement that an international force would have an appeal to the right

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

sort of idealists to go into the disturbed area in order to restore peace. I am afraid that in a force of that sort the roughneck who might go in might increase, rather than decrease, the difficulties of the disturbed area. I should like to feel that the hon. Member is right, and that it would attract idealists to go there to hold the pass during the critical period ahead.

I want as strongly as I can to support the plea made yesterday by the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes), that His Majesty's Government should use their influence with the Arab States to localise this problem. No other hon. Member has stressed the importance of this as clearly as did the hon. Member for Ipswich. It is most important that the trouble in Palestine should not spread to the neighbouring Arab States. All of us who, like myself, have been sympathetic with the Arabs have found among them a genuine fear of what might happen if a Jewish State were set up in Palestine. There has also been a fear that reprisals might be taken against the unfortunate Jews in those countries, many of whom were born there and have lived there all their lives, whose ancestors settled there centuries ago. It would be a great disaster if the Arab States sought to take it out of those Jews. I support the plea of the hon. Member for Ipswich that we should do all in our power to appeal to the Arab States not to take it out of those Jews who have been there so long.

Equally we must appeal to the Zionists to restrain those hotheads among them who are appealing to forces inside and outside Palestine not to regard this present settlement as permanent. On page 8 of the "Manchester Guardian" today there is a statement by the Hebrew Legion that this settlement should not be regarded as final, and they state that they aim at the whole of Palestine and not just the awkward, truncated part allotted to them under partition. If such ambitions are to be stirred up on the one side, I must take the opportunity of warning those Zionists that there will be reprisals and that reprisals can be taken against those unfortunate Jews, as the hon. Member for Ipswich pointed out, who are amongst the Arabs in such numbers and have nothing to do with the present quarrel.

Mr. Mikardo: I am sure everyone would wish to associate himself with the appeal

that the hon. Gentleman is making to the Arab countries with regard to their behaviour to the Jews within their boundaries, but I think we should not blind our eyes to the fact—and I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree—that the only anti-Jewish pogrom which has so far taken place in an Arab country has taken place in a British Colony.

Mr. Dodds-Parker: I quite agree, and it is most unfortunate that that should have taken place; but I am warning the Zionists that there is a very genuine fear, which has existed for a long time, that the Zionist claim is not to be limited to Palestine—that they may prepare a movement on the lines of the *Volkdeutsche* movement when Hitler came to power, and which stirred up German minorities living in countries across the world from Patagonia to the Volga. There is a fear there might be a movement which would suggest that because, say, there are 100,000 Jews in Baghdad, the Jews had a claim on that city and to other regions outside the present boundaries of Palestine. We heard an hon. Member say yesterday that Transjordan is part of Palestine, and so the claim has already gone forth for land outside the boundaries of Palestine as they are today. I ask the Foreign Secretary to bring all his influence to bear with the Arab States, who can be such good friends to this country, and have been hitherto, to see that they do all that is possible to limit this trouble to the boundaries of Palestine.

I do not feel that there is very much use at this moment in going over the Balfour Declaration and the history of the time since it was made. What we have to do now is to try to make the best of the situation that will face us in the future, particularly the situation during the next few months. I am one of those who believe that now the decision has been taken that we are to get out of Palestine, we should get out as soon as we possibly can. I am certain that the military authorities will do their very best to implement the decision. Having had a certain amount to do with them, I think they tend to go rather too slow than too fast. However, we know that there is a large amount of stores in Palestine, and that it will take some time to shift them. If we can move out faster, especially from the disturbed areas, so much the better. The Foreign Secretary was good enough to make clear last night that 15th

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

116

1369

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1370

[Mr. Dodds-Parker.]

May is the latest date. It will be generally agreed by the greatest number in this country and in Palestine that the sooner we move out the better, and I would join my voice to the plea that has been made for a speedy withdrawal.

There are one or two points I should like to put to the Foreign Secretary. Our intention must now be to maintain as far as possible the goodwill of the future Arab and Jewish States in Palestine. The Government have said that they would not enforce partition on the Jews and Arabs if the Jews and Arabs were unwilling to accept it. If that is so, will the Foreign Secretary give an assurance that no advantage will be given to either side during our withdrawal? The operation of evacuation is going to be extremely difficult. I do not expect him now to go into details as to how he will carry out such an intention, but if he can give a general assurance that the withdrawal will be on such lines that no advantage will be given to one side as against the other, I think it would meet with general approval in this House and outside. It will be a very difficult thing to do in practice. There is a danger that in the future we shall be charged with having so withdrawn that we left one party armed and another defenceless to be slaughtered. If we can be given some such assurance as that for which I now ask from the Foreign Secretary—that no unfair advantage will be given to either side by our withdrawal—it will do much to set at rest certain fears that exist outside the House.

The next point I put to the right hon. Gentleman is that of the position of the Arab Legion in Transjordan. It is in a difficult position. It is officered by British officers, whose loyalty, of course, is not in question. I ask him to see that there shall never be any strain put upon their loyalty, either on the one side to Britain, or on the other side to the King of Transjordan, whom they are at present serving.

The next point is rather a matter for the United Nations Organisation than for His Majesty's Government, but I should like to know what the attitude of the Government would be if there were an invasion of Palestine. What, for instance, would be their attitude if troops from other Arab States moved into the Arab

State of Palestine? There would, of course, be a strong hostile reaction in the Jewish State of Palestine. We should make clear to both sides that any infraction of the States of Palestine as set up by the United Nations Organisation would be a matter to go before the Security Council, and would be tantamount to war. If that is made clear to both sides, it will clarify the situation and, no doubt, will do much to ease it.

Will the Foreign Secretary bring all his influence to bear on the United Nations Organisation to see whether it is not possible, even at this late stage, to do something about Jaffa? It may be regarded as a comparatively small point in the circumstances, but it is one of significance to the Arab world, and the Arabs want to retain Jaffa if it is at all possible. I ask the right hon. Gentleman, therefore, to use his influence to see that Jaffa is retained in the Arab part of Palestine.

All of us in this House wish to retain the friendship of both sides in the troubled years ahead. Such friendship will depend very much on what we do in the next few months, and I would once again urge the Foreign Secretary to make clear what our intentions are and the way in which our Forces are to be withdrawn, and to see that they are withdrawn as soon as possible.

1.0 p.m.

Dr. Santo Jeger (St. Pancras, South-East): I want to speak today as one who has never subscribed to the Zionist point of view, because I have never been able to define for myself the exact nature of the word "Jew." We are told that the Jews are a religious community; yet there are many Jews who do not hold the Jewish religion—or at least the orthodox side of it—to any extent; also, there are many Jews who do not regard themselves as Jews at all, who have broken completely with the faith of their forefathers, have intermingled and intermarried with people who are not Jews, have taken their place in non-Jewish communities, and have completely cut themselves off from any kind of connection with Jews.

Some people claim that the Jews are a race. I have already referred to a number of Jews who have intermarried, and I am quite sure that there is no people which has intermarried more. They have a larger percentage of intermarriage than

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

any other peoples, because they have been scattered all over the world and married wherever they have lived or passed. If we cannot regard the Jews as a religious or a racial group, can we treat them as a national group? That is a little difficult when one remembers that there are British Jews, Russian Jews, German Jews, and Jews in every country of the world. It is very difficult to conceive that these various national groups could meet together in one small country—Palestine.

On the political aspect of the Jewish people, we have been told that Jews, as one group, have exerted a great deal of pressure on the decision of the United Nations. In this country we have had Jews in the Labour Party, in the Liberal Party, and, I believe, there was one Jew who attained the leadership of the Tory Party. They have never been confined to one political group in this country, and it is sheer nonsense to talk about the Jews in America forming one group which has applied political pressure, when, as we know, there are Jews in every section of American life. They are in the trade union movement, in the Labour movement, in the Democratic Party, in the Republican Party; they are Communists and they are capitalists; they are scattered throughout the whole of the American people in one way or another, as they are scattered and divided throughout the different sections of the British people. Therefore, it is impossible to regard Jews anywhere as being of one nature.

Historically, this question might have been solved no later than 1920, from which period I think the rise of some sort of consciousness of Arab nationalism dates. At that time the question might have been settled without very much strife, and certainly without all the trouble that has happened since. Whatever decision the United Nations had come to on this matter, there would have been trouble; there is no question about that. All the solutions which have been put forward would have led to trouble of one kind or another. Therefore, up to now the attitude of the Foreign Secretary has been a perfectly correct one. The hon. Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. Philips Price) gave us a great deal of secret history for which he could not, or would not, produce any kind of verification, so I think we can dismiss that as of no

account. If, and when, his evidence does arrive we can consider it, but until that time we cannot. I, for one, refuse to consider it—

Mr. Philips Price rose—

Dr. Jeger: And I refuse to give way.

Hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Price: Surely, the hon. Member will permit me a short reply? Would he read the reports of the discussions which are to be found in the Library of this House? He will get all he wants there.

Dr. Jeger: If the hon. Member has the evidence it is a great pity he did not produce it before, when he was categorically challenged on the Floor of the House a few minutes ago, and when he refused to state the source of his information.

Mr. Price: Not the source.

Mr. Mikardo: He suggested it might be out of Order.

Dr. Jeger: If he suggests that to refer to documents in the Library of this House is out of Order, I think he is wrong.

Mr. Price: It was a certain person, or two persons, to whom I said I could not refer in this House. The other material is in the Library.

Dr. Jeger: The hon. Member could have referred to the documents, but he just did not want to; he declined to do so, preferring to make a sort of super-mystery of the whole thing.

The hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke)—whom I am sorry to say is not here—spoke of the great natural wealth of Palestine, saying that there were all sorts of things under the surface. He talked about gold under the Dead Sea, but he did not mention uranium, although I am pretty sure there is uranium in Palestine. The hon. and gallant Member seemed to regard the attitude of everybody, Jews included, towards Palestine as being another great hush-hush mystery. He seemed to suggest that there was a great conspiracy to keep everything in the dark. The only thing lacking in his great mystery story was the old exploded Protocol of the Elders of Zion, which to my great surprise has not yet been introduced in this Debate.

74 A 22

What are we to do with these people? The Foreign Secretary has said that the various nations ought to come to an agreement each to take a quota, but agreement has not been reached. We may suggest that they should go to a Palestine which is not a Jewish Palestine, but if we do that we come up against Arab opposition. The Arabs will not have Jewish immigration. If these people are not to be exterminated which, I suppose, is an alternative solution, which no one has yet suggested, the only other solution is that they should go among their own people, where they will be accepted, housed, fed,

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

1	2	3	4	5	6
	1			2	

Mr. Gammans: That is another way of saying that it is easy to solve a problem before it has arisen.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

I do not wish to discuss the rival claims of Jews and Arabs. I can see both points of view. I can understand why the Jew, after all he has suffered in Europe, should long for a homeland of his own. In these days of horror it is difficult to find words to describe what the Jew has suffered in Europe during the last 10 or 15 years. No one who has been brought up upon the English Bible can fail to appreciate the emotional appeal of Palestine to the

Jew. I can understand, too, the point of view of the Arab, who regards Palestine as his home as well. The Arabs fear, rightly or wrongly, that the Jewish State may overgrow its present boundaries and may threaten the Arab way of life and culture.

I do not blame the Government for the Palestine problem. I do not blame them for the course of action which they feel compelled to take today. I realise the difficulty under which the Colonial Secretary has laboured in the past two years. I imagine that he would like to have had a settlement, and a Cabinet decision, much earlier than he got them. I do not know whether it would have been possible to get an amicable settlement two years ago. It is certainly true that as time has gone on it has been much more difficult to get any agreed settlement at all. I agree also that the right hon. Gentleman has not been helped by some of the things said by his own supporters at the General Election. I know American public opinion reasonably well. During these past two years some of the pledges which have been made, recklessly as I think, have done nothing but harm. They have excited Jews and given Arabs cause to fear, and they have made American public opinion believe that the Palestine problem was capable of easy solution. Those facts should be a warning to us all that we should not take the temptation to make party politics out of international issues.

I come to the questions which I would like to put. What did the Colonial Secretary mean by some phrases he used yesterday? He said:

"The Mandate will, therefore, be terminated some time in advance of the completion of the withdrawal, and the date we have in mind, subject to negotiation with the United Nations Commission, is 15th May."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 11th December, 1947; Vol. 445, c. 1219.]

What does "subject to negotiation with the United Nations Commission" mean? Does it mean that the Commission can, if necessary, make us stay longer or if they are not ready—and they do not show any sign of being half ready by that time—they can compel us to go on? Does it mean that, in those circumstances, we shall wait after 15th May? I will give way if the right hon. Gentleman cares to answer the question.

74 A 25

Mr. Creech Jones: It is the desire of the British Government that the Mandate should, quite definitely, be surrendered by 15th May. The United Nations Commission has been appointed. While it will have a number of duties to perform before it proceeds to Palestine, it will undoubtedly wish to go to Palestine at a very early date. The British Government take the view that there should be only a short period before the termination of the Mandate when the United Nations Commission should arrive. It is a time schedule which has to be worked to. We have made it clear to the United Nations that, as far as the British Government are concerned, 15th May is the time-limit to which Mandate can last. So there is no ambiguity about it. We have to discuss the time schedule with the United Nations Commission, because they are charged, under the decision of the United Nations Assembly, as quickly as they can, to enter into their responsibilities in regard to Palestine. It is merely a question of agreeing to a time-limit, and 15th May represents our furthest date.

Mr. Gammans: It would have been better if the Colonial Secretary had made his statement yesterday on that point in other words, because I read this as being a date about which we were prepared to haggle. I gather from him that this is the final date, and that although we may go before, it is clear that we are not going to go at any time after 15th May. The second question, which I hope the Foreign Secretary will deal with, because it concerns him more than the Colonial Secretary, is how will this evacuation affect our whole balance of strategy in the Near East, and how will it affect what I would call "the home economy" of these islands? The Foreign Secretary, in a Debate in this House on 10th May this year, said that if our interests in the Middle East were lost to us

"the effect on the life of this country would be a considerable reduction in the standard of living. Other parts of the world would suffer too. The British interest in the Middle East contributes substantially not only to the prosperity of the people there, but also to the wage packets of the workers in this country."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 16th May, 1947; Vol. 437, c. 1964.]

We are clearing out of the Near East, and I think that the right hon. Gentleman should comment on his former speech made only eight months ago in this House. Does he still believe that to be true?

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

122

1381

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1382

[Mr. Gammans.]

Does it mean that we are going to suffer a loss in our standard of living, which heaven knows is low enough now? Does it mean this is something which will affect the working classes and all other classes of the community? If that is so, in fairness to the House and to the country, he should say so.

What about strategy? We have cleared out of Egypt, and have given a sort of one-sided promise to evacuate the Canal Zone. Now we are leaving Palestine. Does this mean that we are virtually abandoning the Near East? How does this fit in with Imperial strategy, and have the other members of the Commonwealth been consulted, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, New Zealand and Australia, in regard to this decision? Do they realise what the abandonment of the Near East may mean to them? Do they realise that from now on we may have to regard our lines of communication as permanently being *via* the Cape of Good Hope? We ought to be told about that, because this is more than a problem merely affecting the Colonial Office.

The next question I wish to ask is in regard to security for British property in Palestine. A lot of people have invested money in Palestine because of the British Mandate. Are these people to be abandoned? Suppose their property is destroyed, pillaged or burned, can they come to the Government and ask for any sort of redress? What about the oil interests? There is a lot of British money there. It is more than a question of the investment of British money, because this part of the world is one of the vital sources of oil supply to this country and to the Royal Navy. What is to happen about that, and have we made arrangements for its protection, or have we abandoned that, too? If it has been abandoned, can the Government assure the House that adequate supplies of oil would be forthcoming from other sources?

I wish to ask a question about immigration. The Colonial Secretary skated over that question a bit thinly. Between now and our handing over, what is to be our policy towards immigration? Suppose that a ship sets out for Marseilles tomorrow, shall we stop it, and if so, what about the people on board? Are they to be carted off to Cyprus? What if a dozen ships set off? Do we take them to

Cyprus, and then on 15th May let out all the people who are there? If that is to happen, there will be a great temptation for Jews to build up a source of strength ready for actual warfare should it break out. It is that sort of provocation which may lead the Arabs to take the sort of action we hope they will not take.

Mr. Janner: Has the hon. Member read the recommendations of the United Nations Organisation? If not, I suggest that he does. It will satisfy him that facilities for immigration are proposed by them.

Mr. Gammans: That is not what I am arguing. I am not arguing about what happens after 15th May, when, if the Zionists charter the *Queen Mary*, it is no concern of ours. I am concerned with what happens before that date. If ships set out, will they be stopped, and shall we put those on board in Cyprus, or shall we dump the wretched people back in Germany? The Government must say what they are going to do, because this is the sort of tinder which may set the whole of the Near East alight.

Someone has to say a little more than was said yesterday about these loyal civil servants of the Crown. Are they to be pensioned off if they have earned a pension? I hope no one will get up and say that a special branch of the Ministry of Labour has been set up to try to get these people jobs. That is all very well for a man who has spent 15 or 20 years of his life abroad looking forward to a long and honest career under the Crown. It is not much good dumping him back here and trying to find him a job which will provide him with nothing like the income he has been receiving. The Government have a special responsibility for these men, and should see whether these people cannot continue their careers somewhere in the Civil Service at home or in the Colonial Empire. It will be a shabby and shameful act if we just bring them back, giving them either a gratuity or some small pension, and expecting the Ministry of Labour somehow or other to absorb them into employment.

Mr. Creech Jones: I thought I made it clear that an indication of Government policy in this matter had already been announced, both in Palestine and in this country. We are as concerned as the hon. Member is in regard to the position of

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

the Services, and also, of course, in regard to the Colonial administrators. Very considerable discussion has already taken place, and it is hoped that I shall be in a position to make an announcement very shortly as to our final decision. Meanwhile, I think their apprehensions have been removed. We shall behave generously, and I do not think anyone will have cause to complain that the Government have not behaved properly.

Mr. Gammans: That is all very well, but we heard that about Burma and India. I do not want the Government to turn round and merely say that they will behave generously, but to come forward with something better than a platitude of that sort. Here we are at home taking on a large number of people in nationalised industries and in the Civil Service generally, and we have vacancies in the Colonial Service. I want to see those men being able to continue their service under the Crown, not merely being given a small pension and then handed over to the Ministry of Labour which is asked to do the best it can for them. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to say what he is going to do. We have to treat these men not merely with justice but with some generosity.

Those are the five questions I wanted to ask, and the right hon. Gentleman has been good enough to answer two of them during my speech. I hope, however, that the Foreign Secretary will deal with the larger aspect of the statement he made about the standard of living of the people of this country being tied to our prestige and influence in the Near East and also to wider questions of Imperial strategy.

Finally I would repeat what has been said by almost all hon. Members who have spoken, that, now this decision has been made, let there be no going back on it. I am quite sure that perhaps even up to this Debate there has been a feeling in the minds of some Jews and Arabs, and also the United States, that there was an element of bluff in what we were saying, that we did not intend to clear out, that we were prepared to hold the Mandate baby a bit longer. I hope that as a result of this Debate no misapprehensions on that point will exist any longer.

1.42 p.m.

Mr. H. Hynd (Hackney, Central): I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for South-East St. Pancras (Dr. Jeger)

as to the deplorable anti-British feeling that exists on both sides. I have recently come back from Palestine and have experienced it there. It is indeed deplorable, in view of the record of the Government in this matter, and in view of the settlement that has now been made, a settlement which I regard as the best solution in the light of all the circumstances. Also I think it is a great pity that this settlement has met with so little enthusiasm on the part of the Arab representatives. After all, the Arabs are getting another state out of this. People talk all the time about the new Jewish State, but there is a new Arab State, and while they take up the attitude that they are being deprived of something, we must bear in mind that the last independent Arab State in that part of the world was in 63 B.C. and, up to the first world war, it was under Turkish domination—

Mr. Stokes: Oh, no.

Mr. Hynd: At the time, at any rate, of the first world war.

Mr. Stokes: Four hundred years ago.

Mr. Hynd: Then they were liberated by British Forces. The whole of this Debate, quite rightly, seems to have resolved itself about what is to happen now in the transition period and that, after all, is the vital issue. I regret that I have not heard anyone so far suggest that there will be direct consultation immediately between the Government and the two States concerned. It is essential that they should begin to discuss the details of the handing over of power, and in that connection I must reinforce what has been said by several hon. Members, that the Government might just as well make up their minds now to recognise, on the one hand, the right and the power of the Arab authorities to maintain order in their part of the country, and of the Haganah to maintain order in the Jewish part of the country. I am not at all attracted by the proposals for some kind of a new international police force. It reminds me far too much of the Black and Tans. Why not use the force which everybody recognises exists already? In that connection, too, I think recognition of the Haganah might be valuable in controlling the extremist Jewish Forces in Palestine.

When I was there the other week I was told that, while over 90 per cent. of the Jews were living in terror of the Irgun

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1244 1385

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1386

[Mr. Hynd.]

and the Stern gang, Haganah could control them quite easily if it had half a chance. When hon. Members talk about the Jews in Palestine being antagonistic to the British Forces, I think their tacit acquiescence in what has been going on has been the result of the terroristic methods used by those extremist forces. I suggest that we should recognise Haganah, recognise the right of the Arabs to maintain order also, and withdraw the British members of the Palestine Police Force to the Jerusalem area, the new area that is to be under international control.

The hon. and gallant Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir T. Moore) tried to draw an unfortunate parallel between the situation in Ireland in 1920 and the situation in Palestine today. Dangerous and wrong deductions might be drawn from such a parallel, for the situation is not the same at all. In Ireland it was a question of that country being part of the United Kingdom, and there was a big split amongst the Irishmen themselves as to what should be done. In Palestine we are there primarily under a Mandate from the League of Nations, with the responsibility of some day putting Palestine on its own feet. I will not follow that any further except to point out that it is quite wrong to base any deductions on such a comparison.

One point which has not been followed up as it might have been, is the possibility expressed in the Press of recruitment for the Forces of either side from this country. Would the Foreign Secretary tell us whether the conditions of the Foreign Enlistment Act will be applied in this case, and whether steps will be taken to prevent recruitment in this country for either the Jewish or Arab forces? Also, will my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to say whether it is true, as reported in the Press, that the Transjordan Frontier Defence Force took part in a certain incident in Palestine yesterday? If that is the case, or if there were any suspicion of that happening in the future, I suggest that the Transjordan Force should be withdrawn immediately beyond the frontier of Transjordan.

My hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. Philips Price) remarked on the necessity for keeping illegal immigrants out of Palestine, and asked who will keep them out when the new

State is set up. He need not worry about that. Whatever we may feel about our Jewish friends, we never say that they are not businessmen and realists, and I feel that when the new Jewish State is set up, restrictions on immigration are likely to be even more severe than they are under the present regime. The hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller) asked yesterday whether Jews and Arabs would have full voting rights under the new set-up. That is covered by the Report of the ad hoc Committee on the Palestine question adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 29th November where it says:

"The election regulations in each State shall be drawn up by the provisional council of government and approved by the Commission. Qualified voters for each State for this election shall be persons over 18 years of age who are: (A) Palestinian citizens residing in that State and (B) Arabs and Jews residing in the State, although not Palestinian citizens who, before voting, have signed a notice of intention to become citizens of such State."

This should clear away any dubiety on that point.

The hon. Member for Orpington (Sir W. Smithers) seemed to be suggesting some kind of a new body of crusaders, or some military force to protect the Holy Places. Do we really need to anticipate that there is going to be any difficulty in that direction? The Holy Places have been respected in recent outbreaks, and I see no reason to believe that there will be any danger when the new Arab and Jewish States are set up. My own experience was that most of these Holy Places are in the charge of Arabs or Jews, and are very well respected. Indeed a young Arab who showed me through the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth made a rather surprising remark. "There are no Jews in Nazareth," he said "we are all Roman Catholics." The hon. Member for Hornsey (Mr. Gammans), who happens to represent me in Parliament, much against my will, seemed guilty of one contradiction. He said it was a sad commentary that it should all end in this sorry way. Then he contradicted himself by going on to point out the great advances made in Palestine when he talked about the improvement in exports, and the rest. I suggest that that shows our policy has been successful, and that we have nothing to apologise for in what has happened there.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

I will conclude by expressing the hope, which has been expressed by other speakers, that all this partitioning of the country will settle down after the initial sporadic outbreaks, which I am afraid are inevitable, and that the Jews and Arabs will become good neighbours. Indeed, they have got to become good neighbours, because, in such a small country, it will be impossible for them to live in perpetual antagonism. It is too small economically for that. They will have to get together sooner or later, and the sooner the better. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for South-East St. Pancras (Dr. Jeger) when he expressed the hope that in settling down they would reach the decision to remain within the British Empire as one of our Dominions. That would be the best possible solution.

1.52 p.m.

Mr. Eden (Warwick and Leamington): As I have listened to this Debate, which has now lasted for nearly two days, I have felt, and other hon. Members, I think, have felt, that each of us taking part in it had a difficult and responsible task. We all recognise that we have before us, whatever our view of its present phases, a problem as baffling as any that statesmanship has had to face in recent years. We know it is one that arouses not only sentiment but passion. I for one also believe that it is a problem which is not susceptible to a solution which both sides could be expected to welcome. As was well said by the Royal Commission of 1937, this is a case of deciding not between right and wrong, but as between right and right.

I think that on one issue there will be general agreement; that the Mandate has proved unworkable. For the space of a generation a British administration, consisting of some of the ablest brains and stoutest hearts in our Colonial service, has endeavoured to further the ideal of a Palestinian State, has endeavoured to reconcile conflicting interests and, following the words of the Mandate to secure the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine without prejudice to the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities. We have to admit that that endeavour has failed. In trying to hold the scales evenly between the two parties we have pleased neither side, which may after all, perhaps, be the best tribute to our own impartiality.

74 A 29

I would like to associate myself with the tributes paid to those in the public service in Palestine who through all these years have undertaken an unenviable task with courage, with integrity, and with single mindedness. When the history of this period comes to be written there will be many names which will stand out. I have in mind particularly that of Lord Plumer, in the early years of this endeavour, and later that of Lord Samuel who won the complete confidence not only of Jews but of Arabs also, and finally, in these last years, of Lord Gort, who remained, a sick man, at a post in which he had undertaken to serve only from the deepest sense of duty.

There are others in all walks of official life who rendered equally devoted service, especially the officers and men of the Palestine Police, who performed one of the most ungrateful tasks under conditions without parallel in any other British administered territory. At intervals throughout all this period, especially in the last few months, an intolerable strain has been placed on all ranks of H.M. Forces. They have shown a remarkable restraint and forbearance in conditions as exacting as those which any troops could be called upon to face. They have won the admiration of us all.

For more than a generation we have endeavoured to fulfil an obligation upon which in the last two years we have lavished vast sums of money, and in which many lives have been lost. To those who criticise from a distance the work of the Mandatory Power, I would say, "Could you have done any better?" Now at last we are laying down the burden. We are handing it back to that body on which has fallen the mantle of the League of Nations. With that decision I agree, however much I regret the circumstances which have made it necessary. There is indeed, in my judgment, no alternative. Of course we must do our best to facilitate the transfer of the burden. That is only right and proper. But that we should do more than our share, and particularly that we should continue to carry the burden of transfer unaided until it suits the convenience of others—such a claim is neither just nor reasonable. If there is general agreement over the conclusions of the United Nations Committee that the Mandate is unworkable, there is on the other hand no

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

126

1389

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1390

[Mr. Eden.]

unanimity in the United Nations, as there has been no unanimity in this House, over this recommendation of partition as a solution, although a majority, as the hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) rightly said, a substantial majority, favour it.

Personally I had always hoped that it might be possible to achieve an independent Palestinian State in which Arab and Jew would live and work in harmony. If I have had misgivings in the past about partition, and I have had such misgivings, it has been in part at least because it has always seemed to me to be a matter of the utmost difficulty to create out of Palestine a Jewish State in which the Jews had a real chance to live—what our French friends call *un Etat viable*—to make such a State for the Jews, without at the same time placing within that State considerable areas which had overwhelming Arab majorities. That has always seemed to me one of the fundamental difficulties of partition, and it is certainly what has happened in the scheme before us now.

I think that if we are to be fair we must also realise that while partition gives the Jews something they have always wanted, that is, an independent State as opposed to a National Home in the Holy Land, it does not give them all they want, since the Zionist ambition has been to spread over the whole of Palestine. But, I think the House will agree that partition, certainly this scheme of partition, bears more heavily on the Arabs who will not only lose a portion of the land they regard as their own but will see included in that Jewish land, a large Arab population. There is the position, and at this late hour there are certain realities which we all have to face—Arabs, Jews and those of us who have no wish but to see harmony between the two races.

Partition has the backing of two-thirds of the nations of the world, who have given their decision as the outcome of the initiative of the British Government. This seems to me to be the inescapable fact. However little we may like this decision, and I must say that I, for one, am far from happy about it, I cannot see that we have any choice but to conform to it, though I must confess that I do not think I altogether followed the argument of the hon. Member for Cheltenham

(Mr. Lipson) last night in his conclusion of what was evidently a very sincere speech. It was, after all, His Majesty's Government who took the initiative in asking the United Nations to pronounce upon this matter. As members of that organisation, it really is not open to us to seek to repudiate their decision because we do not like their conclusions. If we thought there was a risk of that and a risk we were not prepared to resist, we ought never to have placed the proposition before them.

Mr. Lipson (Cheltenham): I am afraid I did not make myself clear last night, but I did not suggest that the Government should repudiate the decision, but that we should refuse to take any part in implementing a decision of which we do not approve.

Mr. Eden: I did not understand that that was the hon. Gentleman's view, and I am glad that he has pointed that out. That brings us to another point which we have to face, and I am glad to carry the hon. Gentleman with me so far. This applies equally to my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke). I have heard this argument that we should use our efforts to bring Arabs and Jews together. I would say that, to attempt now, at this rather late hour, to try and bring Arabs and Jews together, after all our previous efforts have failed, seems to me to be a policy which holds out no hope whatever. Unhappily, it is only necessary to read what was in "The Times" yesterday from their correspondent to show how far our authority had already vanished. I, for one, could not possibly, in these conditions, agree to an indefinite and increasing military commitment upon ourselves to keep order in a State against the wishes of both sides in the State.

So I say that we have no alternative, in my judgment, but to accept this decision of the United Nations, but this does not mean that these proposals do not require some elaboration and some modification in detail. I think, for example, that the boundaries suggested require more careful examination, and some of the criticisms made earlier in the Debate on that score seem well deserved. I am by no means convinced that there is a case for including the Negeb in the Jewish area. There was also the extraordinary decision to include in the Jewish State Jaffa and its

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

127

environs, which would have resulted in placing about 100,000 Arabs in the Jewish area. I gather that the sub-committee of the United Nations have agreed to rectify this anomaly, and that the Jewish Agency will readily grant freedom of transit between the Jaffa enclave and the main part of the Arab State. If so, that would indeed be something gained.

I believe also that the most categorical assurance must be given by the United Nations as to the inviolability of the frontiers, once they are determined. Without such assurances, both sides are going to rest uneasily for an indefinite period. Apart from the psychological effect of this uncertainty, it would place an intolerable burden on both these small States, and especially on the new Arab State, if they had to maintain defences against the fear of encroachment.

This brings me to one of the essential conditions of any solution which has a real chance to endure. There must be a measure of economic unity between the two States, for only chaos can result if they each go their separate ways in Customs, in currency and in communications.

Nor should we altogether abandon the hope that co-operation in matters of common interest may, in the course of time, bring together the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine. This would, to some extent, ease the inevitable difficulty which must arise from partition, whatever the final plan may be, because there must remain in a large number of Arabs in the Jewish State and some Jews, at any rate, in the Arab State. Here I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary whether he or the United Nations have given any consideration to a planned transfer of minorities? The House will remember that this point was not overlooked by the Royal Commission of 1937, and, no doubt, they had in mind the successful transfer of a million Greeks and a smaller number of Turks in 1922. The difficulty of the Peel Commission was that they were dealing only with Palestine, and, therefore, they had the problem of whether there was room for the transfer of 300,000 Arabs to other lands in Palestine. I should have thought that the question which now arises is whether, with the co-operation of the adjoining Arab States, room might not be found to absorb some part of the Arab minority which

will be left in the Jewish State. I should have thought that this was a question worth pursuing.

There is one other comment which I should like to make, and it concerns the appointment of the members of the Commission that U.N.O. is going to set up. Six countries, I understand, have been chosen to nominate representatives, and I also understand that not one of them has yet done so. I hope that that does not mean that U.N.O. is inclined to think that there is no particular urgency in the matter, because we can always carry on until they are ready, for that is truly not the position. There are, indeed, several important points on which, if I may say so, we have been left in the dark, and which I hope the right hon. Gentleman will desire to clear up. There seemed to me to be too many references in the Colonial Secretary's speech to matters which would be "explored by the United Nations Commissioners at an early date." That phrase had an ominous ring to me.

Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us, for example, whether the United Nations have any kind of timetable before them at all? Can he give us any information as to what are their ideas, if they have any ideas, as to the force, if any, which the United Nations propose to make available for Palestine when the Mandate comes to an end? It may be that they have decided that they do not want one, or, perhaps, that they do. If so, what is the force, and when will it be ready to operate? There has also been mentioned the vital matter of Jewish immigration between now and the time when we surrender the Mandate. Have the British Government made up their minds as to what they propose to do with Jewish illegal immigrants now detained in Cyprus? I think that is a point upon which the House ought to be informed.

I want to put one more point to the right hon. Gentleman on this question of the date of the surrender of the Mandate, because the Colonial Secretary, earlier this afternoon, when not so many hon. Members were in the House, referred to this question of date and gave further clarifications, but we want to be assured that the date of 15th May is not a date which is subject to negotiation with the committee of the United Nations; that is to say, that we say that it is our definite date on which we shall go, and that it

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

74 A 32

I will, first of all, deal with the questions which have been raised both by the last speaker and by many others about the termination of the Mandate. We have

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

fixed, after the most careful consideration, the date of 15th May. That date was arrived at having regard to all the negotiations that have to be conducted. The transfer of power to the United Nations is not simply a matter of walking out of Palestine. They are members of the sterling area. There is the whole question of currency, trade, and a variety of economic things, which I will not enumerate, but which have to be dealt with with very great care. In addition to the mere transference of power, one does not want to add to the chaos by economic disorder as well. When we examined all the things—which, I am sure, the House will not want me to go into in any detail—that had to be done to carry out an orderly transfer, we felt that if we fixed a date any earlier than 15th May, we might fall down on it, and that the transfer would not be complete. I must remind the House that, whatever one may think of the Government, there is in foreign affairs, to use the colloquial, “a pretty big plateful” of problems going on at the same time, and Palestine is only one of them. There are the East and Europe.

May I just put in a word for our officials? All the officials of the Government, particularly the higher officials, who have to deal with these intricate problems, are just being worked to death at the present moment. We had to take into account all these things—available staff, experts, and everybody we could call on—in order to try to see whether we could make an orderly arrangement. If it is found that the negotiations on all these matters with the United Nations move more quickly than we think, and we can fix an earlier date, we shall do so. We should like to have accepted the suggested date in February, but we found it was physically impossible to do so, and we have had to tell the United Nations that fact. On the other hand, we have indicated to them—and this deals with the point about setting up the Commission—that they must get on with the Commission because 15th May is the last date. We are definitive on that, and, therefore, there can be no misunderstanding of our position. I think that clears up the point which the hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller) raised last night.

Then, I have been asked whether the withdrawal of troops can be completed

more speedily. Here, again, I know it is the usual method to have a shot at the War Office and other people about these things, but we really went into it with very great care, and we could not fix a date about which we could be definite without very great loss. After all that we have put into Palestine for the last 30 years, I cannot see why we should have a loss. I do not think we are entitled to lose anything at all. I do not believe there is any need. I must remind the House that we did build up great communications and, as everyone knows, there was a great base in Palestine. We cannot, and we ought not, to waste the taxpayers' money unnecessarily. Therefore, I do not anticipate trouble over that side of it. We think that by 1st August we can do it.

One of the things we have had to take into account is that we are pledged to this House to bring home 258,000 men, independent of these men, by 31st March. Shipping is a very great problem and the re-deployment of these great forces is an enormous thing. I must say this, that in our balance of payments position one of the great handicaps which have been hindering our restoration is that this war was so world-wide, and we have had to use our shipping so long to get our stores back, and to get our men back, that we have not got our shipping back into an earning capacity as fast as we had hoped to do. This country is going through it a little, and while we have to turn extra shipping on to this problem in order to meet this date—together with what we are already committed to—it does mean a very grave loss of earnings for the economy of this country in consequence.

Having told our Forces that we were going to take them out under the demobilisation plan of 1948, and the dates having been given to the House, we had to try and work this scheme in without disappointing those we had already told we were going to take out. If it had been otherwise we would have had trouble in the Army, because of the pledges given. So that 1st August, bearing all these facts in mind, and the associated facts and circumstances—the transport and the rest—was the very best date to which we could absolutely pledge ourselves. But here again, if circumstances arise in which we can speed this thing up to bring it earlier, we shall do it. The trouble was

129

1	2	3	4	5	6
1				2	

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

130

1397

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1398

[Mr. Bevin.]
that we had to give a date to the United Nations. We had to give them a date which we could reasonably feel we could keep, and that is the reason for 1st August.

I have been asked to give fuller details of our plan for the various stages of the withdrawal. This is a military operation. It is a very delicate operation, and I am sure the House will agree with me that the detailed arrangements now being made to carry this out with the minimum risk of disturbance, and consequent loss of life, are not a proper subject for discussion. We may vary our arrangements. We have a plan at the moment, but I was asked only yesterday if I could vary that plan, and I have referred to the Chiefs-of-Staff for advice. It may be varied as we go along. I do not know, and I would ask the House not to press me for any details as to what we are going to do under the military circumstances.

Another point which has been raised is the question of immigration. I am not mentioning every Member who raised it, because I was not here yesterday and I have had to try to get out the points. There is no obligation upon us to change the immigration quota during the short remaining period in which we shall be responsible in Palestine. Here I want to make an appeal to the Jews. If this were done, or if any attempt were made to bring in numbers of immigrants, in spite of our control, and so cause trouble, in my view this would be another and most important contribution to unrest. At a critical moment of this kind I hope that commonsense will prevail.

Our hope is that the question will be considered in a statesmanlike manner, and that we may be able to hand over to the authority which succeeds us without having to deal with any further trouble on this score. My view is that if the British Navy and the British Army, in addition to trying to keep order during the transition period between now and when we go, are called upon to have rows at Haifa and Tel-Aviv with immigrant ships arriving, it will do the Jewish cause more harm throughout the world than anything else that could happen. It will be regarded as a provocative act, and I say to them advisedly that, in my view, they should leave this matter alone

74 A 34

until the State is set up, and should deal with it then.

Between now and the withdrawal we do expect to clear Cyprus. We must do that. We cannot have illegal immigrants on British territory after that time, and we will negotiate with the United Nations Commission in order to see that all that is arranged. I was asked a question about the Arab Legion. I should explain that this is a Force which owes allegiance to the King of Transjordan, but units of it have, for some time, been serving under the orders of the British G.O.C. in accordance with a long standing arrangement with King Abdulla. It has been decided that all these units will be withdrawn from Palestine at the same time as the withdrawal of the British Forces. That withdrawal will be completed when the withdrawal of the British Forces is completed. I think that that meets the question raised by the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) and the hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller), and also some Members on this side of the House who raised it yesterday. I have been asked also that we should take proper care not to leave materials of war in Palestine. We are giving priority to the removing of implements of war from Palestine. We shall not leave any warlike stores behind after 1st August.

The hon. and learned Member for Daventry last night quoted the report on the question of voting in the proposed Arab and Jewish States. He did not think that the report clearly established the right of Arabs to vote in the Jewish State or of Jews to vote in the Arab State. I have looked this up again and on the revised report—and the document by which the future United Nations Commission will be guided is the revised text approved by the General Assembly on 29th November—and this text provides for the elections to the Constituent Assembly of States as follows:

"The election regulations in each State shall be drawn up by the Provisional Council of Government and approved by the Commission. Qualified voters for each State for this election shall be persons over 18 years of age who are (a) Palestinian citizens residing in that State and (b) Arabs and Jews residing in the State, although not Palestinian citizens, who, before voting have signed a notice of intention to become citizens of such State."

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

So I think the position is quite clear that they all have a vote. In fact, one of my arguments in these discussions about federal states and cantonisation and so on has been much on the lines of that of the hon. Member for Central Hackney (Mr. H. Hynd) this morning. I cannot believe that when these states are set up everybody will vote either as Jews or Arabs. Some of them might even be Conservatives or Liberals, and the rest Socialists or Communists; I cannot tell, but I do not think that ultimately they will vote strictly according to religion or race. I do not think they ever do, certainly not if they follow Western methods. I cannot answer if they follow other methods. The other qualification is that no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants on the grounds of race, religion, language or sex. Accordingly, I think we have covered the ground so far as providing a democratic basis for the states is concerned.

I very much welcome the contributions which have been made by hon. Members in this Debate and the tributes that have been paid to the achievements of the British Administration and police in Palestine, a great number of whom have made the supreme sacrifice in the course of their duties. I associate myself and His Majesty's Government with those tributes. Many devoted public servants have spent the greater part of their lives in that service, in building up the country in very difficult circumstances. Certainly those with whom I have been associated have really wanted to make a success of that great task but, owing to racial and religious difficulties, they could not get the roots of the administration into the people. That was not their fault and, in spite of that, they have done a great job. From time to time they have been subject to considerable unjust criticism, and we are under a great obligation to them.

The question has been asked what sort of treatment they will get now that their careers are cut short. I am authorised to say that they will receive adequate compensation. I cannot make a detailed announcement at this stage—the question will have to be gone into—but I assure the House that in winding up the affairs of the Palestine Government, His Majesty's Government will make it their duty to ensure that those whose careers are personally affected will get a square

deal. As a member of the Government making this pledge, I am fortified by the knowledge that there will be plenty of hon. Members in this House to hold me to it if there is any attempt to depart from it. In any case, I think it is a case of "penny wise and pound foolish" if, in doing a job of this sort, we are mean in our treatment of people whose careers we have to interrupt. So far as I am concerned, that will be the spirit in which I shall deal with this problem.

One of the criticisms which have been levelled against us has been that we allowed two years to elapse before reaching the decision to lay down the Mandate. I welcome this opportunity of answering that criticism. We have been told that solutions could obviously have been imposed at an earlier stage. I have always believed, and I believe now, that in dealing with other people the method of riding roughshod is wrong. It does not succeed. In Palestine we were faced with an accumulation of bitterness and hostility. If at any time since the present Government came into office, since the end of the war, we had attempted to coerce Arabs in the interest of Jews, or Jews in the interest of Arabs, we should have set alight a conflagration for which we were not prepared to accept the responsibility. I am quite convinced that in view of the great and difficult problems, which the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) appreciates as well as I do, the starting of a conflagration in the Middle East would have been a disaster for the world. I was not prepared to do it, and I do not apologise for not having done it. I believe that the right thing to do is to try to get agreement. Had the British Administration been left unfettered to handle this problem, as it ought to have been, without interference from others in other countries, I quite believe that we should have been successful. I say that emphatically. Over and over again we got very near to a solution, only to have the cup dashed from our lips. It is bitter to have to face this situation now.

I wish to say this on the subject of war: Any fool can start one. It does not take a very clever man to start a war, but it takes an awful lot of work to clear it up after there has been one. Having been on this job for months and months, and having studied the problem in all its aspects, I think that the Arab feeling on this question has been underestimated. It

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

132

1401

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1402

[Mr. Bevin.]
has got to be assessed at its correct value by everybody, or we shall not get a peaceful settlement of this problem. It is because I want it assessed at its proper value that I do not want the Arabs to be dismissed as if they were nobody, and as if one has only got to do this, that or the other and everything will be all right. That is not the way to treat this vexed and very serious problem.

Let us assume for a moment that we had gone to the United Nations without allowing the two years to elapse. What would have been said to us? Two conditions would have arisen. First of all, we should have been asked, "Have you tried to settle it yourself as the Charter lays down?" We tried. Secondly, let us assume that we had tried to impose a settlement by force, or alternatively, that we had proposed a trusteeship. The interested states would then have had to be consulted. Either one of them could have taken us to the Security Council for having endangered peace and security in the world, and we should have been before the United Nations not as voluntarily laying down the Mandate in the manner that we have done, but accused of disturbing the peace of the world. Such was the situation as between Jew and Arab that I did not think that course would contribute to a final and satisfactory solution.

The other accusation is that I turned down the Report of the Anglo-American Committee. Was there ever a more outrageous and inaccurate statement than that? Why do hon. Members make that accusation? They know it is not true. What happened was that I got the Cabinet to agree to the Anglo-American Committee's Report. I said that if they came to a unanimous decision I would accept it and would recommend the Cabinet to accept it also. But what happened?

The United States would take only one point—100,000 immigrants—and the Jews would take only one point. And I was not prepared to accept the report of an Anglo-American Commission on one point and discard the other nine which were vital to its success. That any Member of this House—especially a Member of my own party—should make these accusations against his colleague without foundation is, I think, most unfortunate. I hope I have cleared that up.

74 A 36

The second thing we did was to convene the conference on the Morrison plan. Indeed, if one takes the majority decision that they are now operating, it will be seen that they have had to have an economic council for the whole territory. I have never yet been able to see how a little country like that, with railways, post, telegraph and the rest, can be economically run and can be made viable if divided. This is not a question of prejudice or anything like that; it is merely a question of how you are going to make a viable State, and the United Nations have had, in an indirect way, to come to the same kind of conclusion as the Morrison plan—or what was afterwards modified and called the Bevin plan. In fact, you have to have something in that form.

I am not going, and His Majesty's Government are not going, to oppose the United Nations decision. The decision has been taken. As someone has said we have tried our best. We have no intention of opposing that decision, but we cannot ourselves undertake, either individually or collectively in association with others, to impose that decision by force. We have been in this country over 30 years and, whatever we do, if we use British forces now, we shall be in a very difficult position. Therefore we have made it perfectly clear, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies said in his statement on the first day, what our position is, and that we adhere to.

Mr. Warbey (Luton): Can we be quite clear on that point? Do I understand from what the Foreign Secretary has just said that if the Security Council were to decide that collective enforcement action was necessary in respect of Palestine, this country would not take its share as one of the members of the United Nations?

Mr. Bevin: That is what the hon. Member must understand. It is for the Security Council to lay down itself how they will find the forces, and the form of the forces, but I cannot use British organised forces nor can I be a party at the present moment, with security forces as a whole not yet organised in the United Nations, of putting British forces under other commands. When the scheme is finally worked out of what this United Nations force is to be, what its command is to be, and what its obligations are to be, not

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

only in Palestine but as part of the international set-up, then we will take our corner, but to put British forces under another command in this way in an isolated instance is a thing we are not prepared to do.

We feel we have done our best and the problem of enforcement must be left to others. While we remain responsible for the Mandate, we shall do everything in our power to prevent things getting out of hand in Palestine as a result of the bitterness between the two communities there. In addition, I have on behalf of His Majesty's Government—and will continue to do so—to impress upon all those principally concerned, whether Arab or Jew, the grave responsibilities which they have and the necessity for keeping their feelings under control, to avoid any form of incitement, to prevent loss of life and unnecessary damage to the economy and future of Palestine. I think in any attempt to fight it out they will do more damage to each other than they will gain. In saying this I cannot minimise the bitterness, the very real bitterness, in Palestine today. In spite of our efforts, that bitterness has grown over the last 30 years.

Of course, the Palestine problem might have evolved differently and might have evolved to a satisfactory solution if it had not been for Hitler. The Hitler regime, as some one said this morning naturally created an intensified Jew consciousness because of the persecution and the bitterness that went on. It threw upon the British administration, as a result of that persecution a task which was multiplied many times. The evolutionary character of the National Home was destroyed and hence the difficulty arose. But I must say this. It could have been easier. It can be eased now by the United Nations if they will take a decision I have pleaded for over and over again. Even now they have taken their decision on Palestine—with which I am not going to quarrel or criticise—that does not solve the Jewish problem in Europe. Yet it requires such a comparatively small effort on the part of the countries of the world, if they took their proper quota and helped to clear this thing up for once and all, in addition to the numbers who might go into Palestine in the ordinary way.

If I may say so, I think this country has been placed in a very invidious posi-

tion to be lectured and cajoled as to what we ought to do about Palestine, when the doors of other countries had not been thrown open to these people to assist in this terrible tragedy they have had to go through. Even now, I say it would be one of the contributory factors towards peace and easement and the prevention of peace letting if the immigration doors are opened. In any circumstances, even when you take the total number that is put forward, Palestine cannot find a way to solving this problem. The task of the Army and the others at the end, when the Mandate is handed over, will be to protect themselves in the withdrawal. They must get out at the date I have mentioned. I think I have dealt with all the questions.

Britain has a great record in the Middle East. Since the first World War these Arab states have been created. I do not give credit to my own party alone for what Britain has done. I believe, after reading all the papers and all the records of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office concerning this problem, that it has been the great desire of every Government of this country from 1917 till now to create an independent State of Palestine, in the hope that these two Semitic races, different in religion yet common in origin, could find a way to live together, and that within this arrangement, within Palestine, they could find a way to contribute to the new development of the Arab and Jewish organisms in the Middle East. No doubt, the Jews could have brought great abilities, organising capacity. The Arabs, having found their freedom, need it. If only Jews and Arabs could get over this racial difficulty.

This country has found scientists, experts, technicians, all kinds of people to try to build up the Middle East, not merely as a strategic centre, but as a centre in which a new social order and development might take place. Great irrigation schemes now have been worked out, and, I am happy to say, are being started in the various parts of the Middle East, which in time, when completed, will rate with the T.V.A. scheme in America. All this great preliminary, scientific, engineering and other work has been going on with our assistance, and in the end will contribute to a higher standard of life for the masses of people, whose life has not changed very much for 1,000 years but who have a new-found

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

B4

1405

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1406

[Mr. Bevin.]

nationalism, a new impulse urging them on to catch up with Western civilisation. Britain has played a very great part in that work. I can only hope that this difficulty between the Arabs and Jews will not conflict with that beneficent task. I hope the great friendship for both of them, which has been historically associated with this country, will continue and I sincerely hope that the passing shadows may finally be dispelled, and that we can succeed in bringing the Arabs and Jews together.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington that anyone who tries now to go out with some proposal for Arabs and Jews to meet, is bound to be disappointed. On the other hand, there is the United Nations' decision. There it is, no one intending to challenge it, no one intending to turn back on that judgment. There that decision is of that world organism, whether we agree with it or not. It is on the statute book of that great organisation. May it be possible to implement it. If it is, and if my colleagues or I can render any assistance, with advice, with help, with our officials, with our administrative ability, with our historical knowledge, to smooth out the transition, to try to prevent the divisions from being widened—in other words to do anything possible to promote concord, friendship and amity between these peoples—we shall do it.

That is the principle and policy we shall follow. The decision having been taken, I hope that nothing will be said in this country by Press or public which will make more difficult the task of ending this age-old controversy, of bringing these two great peoples together, and of ushering into the Middle East a co-operative effort, instead of the long, long strife that has embittered it in the past.

Sir W. Smithers: The right hon. Gentleman has not been able to give any considered opinion on the enclave round Jerusalem and the holy places with access to the sea. Will he give an assurance that he will look into that and do all he can to persuade the United Nations organisation to do so?

Mr. Bevin: I did not refer to that because it is clearly set out in the Report, and it was referred to by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I think it is quite

clear. I forgot to mention it. I was asked whether we were tendering advice and so on. Sir Alan Burns of the Colonial Office, a great expert, is on the Committee rendering assistance.

Mr. Janner: Will my right hon. Friend answer some of the questions I put to him at the end of my speech yesterday? They are practical questions. The first one was whether it is true that the civil guard that is being formed is not being given arms, while members of Haganah are being arrested because they have got arms to protect the Jews? Another question was, Does he intend to open a port shortly?

Mr. Bevin: I cannot agree to open a port until we lay down the Mandate. We cannot have two administrations at one time. Really, it is impossible. I had better be quite frank about these things. I do not want to get into conflict with the Jews, and I hope the Jews will not get into conflict with His Majesty's Government, His Majesty's Navy or Army. It is a little patience that is required. There are but a few months to pass before we lay down the Mandate. As to the other point about arming, I am not conversant with the details, but I do not think it is right for us to begin arming anybody in Palestine—either side. [An Hon. Member: "We are arming the Arabs."] I do not know that we have armed anybody at all.

2.59 p.m.

Mr. Cooper-Key (Hastings): I think I am expressing the opinion of both sides of the House when I say that the Colonial Secretary has had the sympathy of all of us in the last few months in the task he has been undertaking. The Foreign Secretary's speech has achieved two things. First, I think he has made some firm observations which will help towards an understanding of our attitude in the interim period until surrender of the mandate. Secondly, I think he has satisfied both sides of the House on the questions put to him during the Debate. Thirdly, and less constructively, I would point out that I arrived today at 11 o'clock with a prepared speech which he has succeeded in smashing to smithereens.

I did not entirely agree with the Foreign Secretary with regard to the two years' delay in submitting this problem to the

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

United Nations. Nor did I find real satisfaction in the right hon. Gentleman's speech, as to why this two years' procrastination, and the consequent loss of £200 million and many valuable lives, should have been justified by the action taken by the Government. The Foreign Secretary failed to answer a question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey (Mr. Gammans) on Imperial strategy, the effect of this decision on our Far Eastern and Mediterranean interests, and whether or not consultations have taken place with other interested Powers on the strategic situation of the Suez Canal tying up with our Imperial strategy. Nor did he refer to the effect of the wage packets of the workers, which was also referred to by my hon. Friend. In that regard, I would repeat the statement made by the Foreign Secretary earlier this year:

"The British interests in the Middle East contribute substantially, not only to the prosperity of the people there, but also to the wage packets of the workers in this country."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 16th May, 1947; Vol. 437, c. 1964.]

Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would make a statement showing what effect this decision will have upon the wage packets of the workers of this country.

This rather sordid and complicated matter has several very simple issues. I believe it was right for us to refer the Palestinian problem to the United Nations organisation; but I believe it was wrong that we should have waited two and a half years before doing so.

Mr. Lever (Manchester, Exchange): I understand the hon. Member to be complaining because the Government waited two and a half years before sending this matter to U.N.O. Why, then, has the hon. Member waited two and a half years before tendering that advice to the Government?

Mr. Oliver Stanley (Bristol, West): If the hon. Member reads the Debates of last year, he will find that we did tender advice.

Mr. Cooper-Key: The Government are in possession of very many more facts than I am. Having given the problem over to U.N.O. for their decision, it is right for us to accept that decision. About that, there can be no doubt. I was rather disturbed by the taint of

political expediency rather than statesmanship in the method by which the U.N.O. decision was arrived at. If so great a question is to be settled by U.N.O., and if we are to have hope for the future, it is essential that the world in general should have clear confidence in an international organisation. Yesterday, I received a message from someone who was at Lake Success, and which differed considerably from observations made yesterday by hon. Members opposite. This man writes:

"When on 26th November partition was on the verge of defeat reluctant State Department officials were swept aside, and the political machine went into full action—and the Americans say so themselves. Of those voting for partition, Haiti and the Philippines had told the Assembly that they would never agree to the dismemberment of Palestine. Liberia had assured the Arabs privately, a few days before partition was arrived at, that they opposed partition. Paraguay stayed away to avoid voting. There could be no doubt that pressure achieved those changes of front. I understand, further, this morning, that there is news of an attempt to institute a Congressional inquiry in the States into the pressure which was brought to bear on certain delegations, in particular Liberia."

There seems to me to have been some rather sordid lobbying in arriving at a decision in this case—

Mr. Janner: I am sure that the hon. Member would not wish to create a wrong impression, to suggest that Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, America, or Russia were compelled, by force of sinister circumstances such as he has suggested, to vote in the manner in which they did vote.

Mr. Cooper-Key: I am not suggesting that. I am referring to those countries which I have just mentioned.

Mr. Janner: Well?

Mr. Cooper-Key: What does the hon. Member mean by that?

Mr. Janner: I will say what I mean. The hon. Member has just said that the Arabs had been assured by one of the States, which, obviously, must have been under pressure by them, that they would vote against partition.

Mr. Cooper-Key: I am referring only to the countries I specifically mentioned; I am not referring to Australia. I believe that the danger which faces us is very much greater than would appear from

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

136

1409

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1410

[Mr. Cooper-Key.]

some of the speeches we have heard. The decision of the United Nations has been described by one of the parties as "illegal and unjust," and it is noteworthy that this has been backed by 13 negative votes and 10 abstentions, comprising the Muslim world of 200 million people as opposed to a total Jewish population of between 10 million and 20 million.

I am very glad that the Government have decided that there must be no change or postponement of the date for surrendering the Mandate. I hope that preparations will now be made—in view of the weak nature of the committee which has been elected to carry out this Partition—immediately to protect the interests of nationals, and to continue health, transport, and financial services during the transitional period. I would like to re-emphasise the weak nature of this committee. I think it is generally considered to be far weaker than it should be to deal with an advanced problem of this kind, and we must, therefore, do all we can to impress upon the Commission the difficulty of finding a working solution to this problem, bearing in mind that we, who are great Colonial experts, have failed to find a solution during the last 30 years.

3.9 p.m.

Mr. Mikardo (Reading): I think the House will have been interested, and perhaps a little surprised, to have heard my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary today in a mood and manner rather different from those which usually characterise his speeches. There appeared to be none of his usual effervescence, none of his usual ebullience and aggressiveness, none of the signs we expect to see when he jumps on his charger, puts on his armour, and rides off in several directions at once. No, my right hon. Friend was a subdued Foreign Secretary today, and the House must have sympathised with him a great deal in coming here to wind up this Debate which, doubtless, he hopes is the Palestine Debate to end all Palestine Debates.

Two years ago, my right hon. Friend said boldly that he would stake his reputation on finding a solution of this problem, and he must have had the feeling today that what has happened was that that rather thoughtless, unwise, and perhaps a little arrogant boast had sneaked

round behind him and had started to stab him in the back. It was perhaps his consciousness that he was not altogether convincing in blaming the Americans for his failure to make good his boast that caused my right hon. Friend to be in such a subdued mood.

I want to comment upon three topics that were touched upon by the right hon. Gentleman. The first was his saying quite bluntly that, although he accepted—I thought he did it, at best, grudgingly—the decision of the United Nations organisation, he believed in the Morrison plan, as it was called, the three-Power federalist plan. Of course, my right hon. Friend has a complete right to believe in that plan, but he has no right to pretend, as he tried laboriously to do, that the present decision is the same as the Morrison plan. On two occasions my right hon. Friend said words to the effect that, after all, the United Nations solution was more or less the same as the federalist plan.

The most outstanding characteristic of the Morrison plan was that it was a three-party plan with the British in it. The most outstanding characteristic of the findings of all the members of U.N.S.C.O.P., both the majority and the minority, was the completely unanimous view that, whatever else happens in Palestine, the British ought to be out of it. Whatever anyone in this House may think, there is no question that the United Nations as a whole differed from the Lord President of the Council, who gave his name to the other plan, in believing that the absence of the Foreign Secretary from future association with Palestine would not be an enormous hindrance to the finding of an adequate, peaceful solution to the problem presented in that country.

The second point I have in mind was commented upon by a number of hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Hastings (Mr. Cooper-Key), and is the reference which the Foreign Secretary made a few months ago, not in this House, to his idea that a British evacuation of Palestine would lower the standard of living of every worker in this country. My right hon. Friend offered no evidence at the time for that remarkable assertion and he has offered no evidence since. It is difficult to determine on what basis of economics such an assertion was ever

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

founded. It is true that our standard of living depends not inconsiderably upon cotton from Egypt, oil from Iraq, and citrus fruits from Palestine, but before the war we always depended successfully upon them without having a couple of hundred thousand men on either side of the Suez Canal. I have no doubt that we shall be able to do so in the future. It was strange not to find the Foreign Secretary explaining what a remarkable change had come about, resulting in the fact that now it was possible for us to evacuate Palestine without every worker in Great Britain being short of food, despite the fact that only four or five months ago, according to his conception of the situation, it was not then possible.

Perhaps the most remarkable of the points made by the Foreign Secretary, and one upon which I cannot refrain from commenting, was his assertion that we could not have done anything about this matter a couple of years ago, however much he might have been requested so to do by Members on all sides of the House. His reason was that that would have been riding roughshod over the people of Palestine and would have been imposing a solution, and that would have been repugnant to the tender, kindly heart of the Foreign Secretary. What has the Foreign Secretary been doing in Palestine for the last two years if he has not been imposing anything? Why has he wanted 100,000 soldiers there? It is clear that the presence of those large armed Forces has been because the Foreign Secretary has been imposing something. If he has not been imposing a policy, presumably he has had those soldiers there, as my hon. Friend the Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) suggested yesterday, in order to impose the absence of a policy. I am sure the Foreign Secretary cannot be so naive as to imagine that he could take in the House for one moment with that sort of thing.

I want to underline one other point which has been made by a number of hon. Members, and principally by my hon. Friends the Members for Central Hackney (Mr. H. Hynd), and Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman), and that is that the whole of this Debate, including the speech of the Foreign Secretary, has seemed to be much more lugubrious than the situation demands. We have done too much talking about failure during these last two days. As a number of Members have

pointed out, there is a good deal of gain in Palestine. Notwithstanding all the difficulties and all the ill-feeling, there has been some record of advancement due to Jews, Arabs and British, each making a different sort of contribution. I do not look upon partition as a failure, and, above all, I do not look upon partition as a confession of the abandonment of all hope of ever getting Jews and Arabs to live and work together. On the other hand, it may be the only means by which Jews and Arabs can, through economic co-operation, eventually be brought to political co-operation. The New England States have a proverb which says:

"Good fences make good neighbours."

There is a great deal of sagacity in that. When we have people quarrelling and bickering over frontiers between their respective domains, it is a good idea to remove that cause of bickering, and then to see whether they cannot get on together on other grounds. I believe that we could remove irredentism in Palestine by the United Nations saying: "Look here, you chaps, both Jews and Arabs, it is no good your putting up representations and plans, because we have guaranteed the frontiers and they will not be changed." If that were done, the major potential cause of political quarrelling would be removed for all time, and Jews and Arabs would find very quickly that they needed to enter into some special technical forms of economic co-operation with each other.

Many Members have pointed out that this is a small country, which is true. Other small countries are, of course, to a larger extent capable of a limited degree of self-sufficiency, and are to a much greater extent capable of maintaining economic coherence than Palestine. Not only are there some general economic problems in Palestine, but the question immediately arises of the redeployment of labour as between town and countryside. There is also the problem of a tremendous deficit on the external exchange account, which will come about as a result of the removal of the British troops who have been spending British currency in the country. The deficit perhaps amounts to £30 or £40 per head of the population per annum, which is roughly the same as in this country.

Not only will there be the problem, which will arise when immigration starts,

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

138

1413

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1414

[Mr. Mikardo.]

as it will sooner or later, of the extra capital cost of absorbing temporarily or permanently unproductive people, but, as has been said, this is also a country where there is a tremendous inter-dependence in communications, not only in the case of railways and roads, but in the case of the electricity grid, which, as the frontiers are at present drawn, pops in and out of Jewish and Arab Palestine. Most important of all, in a country like Palestine, where the standard of life depends on the careful husbandry of the water supply, the water pipeline also pops in and out of Jewish and Arab Palestine. Before anyone can get round to irredentism, and long before people will get themselves in any mass degree excited about the amount of violence going on, there will have to be between the two countries shortly after 15th May a joint railway and roads board, a joint electricity board and, above all, a joint water board.

In the long run, the relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine will not be settled by Jewish orators and Arab orators, by terrorists or by agitators on either side, but by the Jew who earns his living growing oranges on one side of the frontier and the Arab who earns his living by growing oranges on the other side both having to use the same lorry to send their oranges to market. They will not quarrel on that, and they will stop other people from quarrelling. It is remarkable that for many years past, right through the Jewish terrorism and the Arab terrorism, right through the political negotiations, in which there have been hard feelings between Jews and Arabs, there has been a joint Citrus Marketing Board where a number of Jews and a number of Arabs have quietly met and decided what citrus gets sold and at what price.

This coming together of Jews and Arabs, this creating of good neighbours over a good fence, depends very much upon a real act of statesmanship by the British Government in the method of its own withdrawal. This country has a long record of redeeming sometimes not so glorious relations with other countries by a final act of brilliant statesmanship. Perhaps the best example, though by no means the only example, of that was the behaviour of this country towards South Africa at the end of the South African war. At this distance of time we can all say that Great Britain did not behave

perfectly in the last decade of the last century towards South Africa, but when the bitterness of the fight had died out, the behaviour of this country towards South Africa was probably one of the most brilliant and glorious examples of treatment by a victor of the vanquished in the history of the world. If we show the same spirit towards Palestine as we showed then, if we really act in the tone of the Colonial Secretary's voice yesterday, rather than the voice of the Foreign Secretary to-day, if we accept ungrudgingly the United Nations report and decision, we shall go a long way towards this end.

I wish to make a particular point about a question yesterday, to which there was no reply from the Foreign Secretary today, that I was able to put through the courtesy of the right hon. Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley). When will the United Nations Five-Power Commission be allowed to go to Palestine? We heard yesterday from the Colonial Secretary, and today from the Foreign Secretary, that it will be only just before May 15th. Every one is agreed that you cannot have two kings in a country at the same time, and it would be quite farcical for that Commission to go there with anything like governing power whilst this country still held the Mandate.

Of course it would be equally farcical if we walked out on 15th May, and the new king had to walk in on 16th May. The right hon. Member for West Bristol made a number of suggestions which might be acceptable to the Government, to the effect that some of the Commission, or some technical officers could travel on different dates. I hope those suggestions will commend themselves to the Colonial Secretary and that in adopting them, and adopting them in that ungrudging way in which he spoke yesterday, with, I am sure, complete sincerity, he will give a lead towards the creation of that new spirit in this tortured country which I believe it is possible to generate. It may be that we shall have once again, as we have had from that country in the past, a new guiding light in the social progress of mankind.

3.26 p.m.

Mr. Beverley Baxter (Wood Green): I will detain the House only a few minutes, as I know other hon. Members wish to speak, but there are a few things

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

which I think should be put on record in this Great House. When we look on the tragedy of the Jewish race, with its many sufferings, it is a very unhappy thing that we should ever be in the position of having even to appear to be adding to their sorrows. Nevertheless, I think it is time the Jews thought a little, not only of the exactions and harassments since the war, but during the war, and that this historic fact remains that because of the Balfour Declaration and because of our great control of Palestine, some 600,000 Jews have been able to live through the years of this dreadful tyranny in happiness and comparative prosperity.

That is an achievement which I think Jewish people everywhere, even the most ardent Zionists, should recognise, that out of the population of Jews in the world Britain was responsible for the happiness and security of 600,000 of those people. Especially, the "bad hat" crowd in New York, who did so much to finance the Zionist Movement in Europe against us, should take cognisance of this fact, and realise their responsibility for many things which have occurred. I would say to them, if my voice could possibly carry across the Atlantic, that they failed to realise what we were doing for them, and that they only increased the suffering of their own people by those methods.

When we were in the unhappy position of having to bring back that convoy of ships from Palestine I thought it a dreadful thing to put those people back into Germany, because, although there are supposed to be no Nazis left, that dark country, with its persecution of the Jews, has not altered fundamentally, and it must have been a cause for despair to those people, who had hoped to reach Palestine, to be turned back. I wish the Government had sent those ships on to New York. I say that with an absolute sense of responsibility. Why not? There is room for them in America, lots of room, and it was from America that this violence was financed. I wish His Majesty's Government, instead of turning those people into Germany, had sent them to America. I believe the Americans, with their combined sense of justice and humour, would probably not have resented it. It would have put the proposition at the door where it belongs.

I think that yesterday in this House, even if it were not a very noisy demonstration from this side, we were delighted and encouraged by the report of the President of the Board of Trade on concluding, in principle at any rate, a trade agreement with Russia. That is the one bright spot that has occurred for a long time in this awful problem of that Eastern combination of nations which is dominated by Communism. I believe that, as the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Mikardo) has just said—

Mr. Solley (Thurrock): I believe that the hon. Member was not present at that time and what he now says is a complete travesty of the truth. The Tory Benches displayed such dismay at the news as was almost completely unique in the history of this Parliament.

Mr. Baxter: I said that there was no particular cheering, because in all things Russian we must be careful that it is not just some trick, but I was certainly here and there was not a single demonstration of disapproval, and the hon. Gentleman opposite is being thoroughly irresponsible. I am sure that I speak for my party on this matter when I say that we were all encouraged by what happened in Russia.

My only point is this. In Palestine, there is only one cure for violence, and that is normality of life. It is not going to be easy for the Stern Gang to put away their guns and become men of peace. The old Biblical saying that those who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind is still true, and there is only one hope for Palestine. If this organisation, heavily financed from New York, will be wise and will be restrained and will give U.N.O. a chance, it is possible, as the hon. Member opposite has said, that the Jewish people may be able to return to their agricultural pursuits and the growing and selling of oranges, elemental as that sounds. My last word to them is this. Let the Jewish race, wherever it spreads itself across the world, acknowledge its great debt to this country here. Let them try to imagine for a moment what are the feelings of parents in this country whose boys were the soldiers who ran through Europe, dying in tens of thousands, to defeat and crush the enemy of Israel—

Mr. Austin (Stretford): And of democracy.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

140

1417

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1418

Mr. Baxter: If the hon. Member likes, certainly, the enemy of the Jews. They crushed the enemy of the Jews, and these soldiers, when peace came and they would normally have gone back to their homes, went to Palestine and were shot in the dark. Let them think of the feelings of the parents who have sons who had been through all the battles of Europe only to be killed in Palestine. One wonders, perhaps, that there is not more bitterness in this country than there is, and, for that reason, I send out this plea to America, where they have such a large organisation and large sums of money to spend on making trouble in Palestine—not the American people, but this organisation to which I have referred, and I can tell the House that I know something about it. There is still time for the Jewish race to show that it has a sense of responsibility, and to show that they will put away their guns and once again take up the ploughshares or whatever it is that they use for growing oranges.

3.34 p.m.

Mr. Orbach (Willesden, East): The hon. Gentleman has just made an appeal to the Jewish people, as other hon. Members have done. I think that too many hon. Members have made this appeal. I have purposely refrained from intervening in a Debate on the Palestine issue until now, because, as an hon. Member of this House who is of the Jewish faith, and representing a constituency which has a considerable number of British citizens of the Jewish faith, I thought, perhaps it would be better to leave Debates of this description to more objective individuals.

But so many references have been made to Jewish Members of this House by those supporting the Arab case that I felt I had to get up on this occasion. Appeals have been made to us as if every Jewish Member of this House was of one mind, and as if we were all participants in some great plot or conspiracy, either to damage this country or to assist another country, and as if we had our own leader in this House and our own Whips.

It ought to go on record that the Members who have been responsible for making such insinuations know perfectly well that they have been talking the most arrant nonsense, the same type of nonsense as I received in a letter from a

constituent of mine who, writing quite seriously, said:

"There are 150 Jewish Members of the House of Commons and, apart from one or two like yourself, all the rest are relatives of the 150."

Those of us who have made a study of this problem know perfectly well that there are 28 Members of this House who are of the Jewish faith, and who are prepared to declare that they are members of the Jewish faith. Almost all of them are at variance with each other on the different subjects which we discuss here.

Having said that I wish to make one or two observations on the matter which we are discussing. I thought that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made a statesmanlike speech this afternoon, and that he was entitled to give an explanation of that for which he had been responsible during the past two and a half years. In so far as he said that, had matters been left to himself, there might have been a juster solution earlier than that being arrived at now, we are entitled to be generous, and to say that, perhaps, my right hon. Friend was perfectly correct. If there had been no interference from different quarters, perhaps he would have been able to reach agreement between Arab and Jew, and perhaps a solution of this problem might have been found in January, 1946, or even earlier. However, I was very happy to hear from his lips, and from those of my right hon. Friend the Colonial Secretary, that we are ungrudgingly accepting the United Nations' decision.

I felt that, however, on the part of certain back benchers on both sides of the House, there was a little bad feeling and ill-grace. It seemed to me that the type of feeling which they expressed was as contemptible, if I may say so, as challenging, if one is part of the home side, the judgment of a referee when the home side have been responsible for his appointment. What, in fact, is this judgment which we have been asked to consider? I do not want to go back either to Moses, as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said last night, to the Balfour Declaration, to the McMahon letters, or to the White Paper of 1939. The judgment of the United Nations Assembly was that two new sovereign states were to be set up—and that is all we ought to consider—instead of the one police state which exists today.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

I think we all accept the fact that the trusteeship which we have held in Palestine has only been exercised in the past few years at any rate, by the use of force. If we are to have two democratic states in place of the one police state which exists today, everybody in this House ought to be prepared to welcome that decision. I thought that much too much attention had been paid to the problems of partition from a geographical point of view, and not enough to the questions considered by the ad hoc Committee which considered this problem in relation to the constitution of these two particular States.

I welcome the fact that representation is to be given to all persons above the age of 18. It seems to me to be carrying democracy a stage further even than in this great country. In so far as there is to be transit permissible for persons from one of the states to the other without let or hindrance, we have something we ought to be thankful that the United Nations has agreed to. In so far also as every individual in the present state could opt as to what particular state he would belong, we ought to thank the United Nations for reaching that useful conclusion.

Having said that, we have to say one or two words—and I would follow the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Mikardo)—about the economic position of Palestine and about the economic position of this country. One hon. Member opposite yesterday who discussed world Jewish sovereignty, and everything else contained in the Protocols of Zion, without mentioning it, that in Palestine there is a great deal of gold. Thousands of millions of pounds were mentioned. I do not think that anybody in this House is seriously concerned about that. Getting gold from Palestine would be almost like getting gold from Fort Knox for redistribution all over the world. But he did say there was potash in Palestine, one of the products of the Dead Sea, as a result of the engineering and chemical operations for which we are all very grateful. Another hon. Member said that uranium might be found. I am not concerned about that, but I do want to say a word or two about the day-to-day economic problems.

What is the Colonial Minister going to do about the food situation in Palestine itself? The wheat position there has been

the worst for years. I understand contracts were signed by the present administration for the importation of wheat into that country. Are those contracts going to be fulfilled, in spite of the fact that two separate States are going to be established? Are the contracts going to be handed over to the two States? I can find, too, no explanation for the embargo placed on diamonds being imported into Palestine today. I do not understand that, and I am wondering whether the administration is suffering any way from peevishness. I think that we ought—and I follow the hon. Member for Wood Green (Mr. Baxter) in this—to start trade negotiations with the two groups who will represent the two Palestines after the Mandate has been ended. Those negotiations ought to be started at the earliest possible time. If we can establish effective economic units in both countries I think we can leave the political *rapprochement* between those two nations in the Near East.

The last speaker had something to say about Jewish gratitude to this country. Let me say this on behalf of all Jews of all types—orthodox, non-orthodox, Liberal, Zionist and anti-Zionist. We have the highest regard and admiration for the British nation. Those of us who are British owe no loyalty to anybody else, but the Jews as a whole throughout the world—and I have spent some time in the United States of America—have a high regard for our way of life. The Jews of Palestine surely showed that during the war, when our backs were to the wall, and when they came to the assistance of the British nation, as did no others in the Near East. I think that recent history will be quickly forgotten. If I may say so the British people by force of arms and in their administration made Zionist aspirations possible. Let us, therefore, now go down in history as a people who accepted a great trust; carried it forward through very great difficulties indeed and who relinquish it with grace and generosity.

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Austin (Stretford): Before I turn to the primary reason for my intervention in this Debate, I want to make a comment on an observation made by the Foreign Secretary, because I thought it had tremendous significance. That was in his answer to a question by my hon.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

142

1421

The Time

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

142

[Mr. Austin.]
Friend the Member for Luton (Mr. Warbey), who asked whether, in the event of the United Nations seeking to enforce collective security in Palestine, we would allow a contingent of British nationals to be in that force. Much to my dismay, the Foreign Secretary categorically said "No." It has always been my belief and desire that the foreign policy of this country should be founded broadly on the United Nations. I believe that has been reiterated from time to time by the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister. If we are not prepared to enforce the sanction of law and order by contribution to an international police force such as that envisaged by my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, then perhaps the edifice of the United Nations is already crumbling. I daresay that the comment of the Foreign Secretary today, if it is his real outlook, must cause a great deal of dismay in the hearts and minds of those associated with the United Nations and the ideals pertaining to it.

The only reason that I want to intervene in this Debate is because of something I read in this morning's "Tribune." We often have extracts culled from more august journals like "The Times" and "The Manchester Guardian," or perhaps the "Daily Express," in deference to the hon. Member for Wood Green (Mr. Baxter), but perhaps it might be appropriate to quote occasionally from the "Tribune." In today's "Tribune" there is a dispatch from their Palestine correspondent dated 9th December, 1947, and I submit that it contains some very alarming observations. I hope the House will bear with me if I read some of these observations. The dispatch begins:

"Jerusalem. The situation here is steadily deteriorating; there is clear evidence that the Mufti faction are gradually securing control over Arab towns and countryside, and are getting ready for country-wide attacks against the Jews."

If we are to look on Palestine today as a trouble centre and a gunpowder barrel, the fuse that is likely to ignite that gunpowder must be the Mufti. I do not intend to recapitulate the hideous and shameful history of the Mufti and his activities, and the fact that he was certainly linked up in material form with Hitler during the war. Certainly I do not want to go into the details of how, by some magical means, the Mufti managed

to escape from France to Egypt and blossom forth into full activity with his Arab satellites, but the Mufti is the menace in the Middle East, and I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies has some channels as I assume he has, of making a contact with the Mufti he will prevail with the Mufti to adopt some course of moderation otherwise, there is no question of there being developed ultimately internecine warfare in Palestine.

May I give the House another comment from this dispatch? After referring to the ascendancy of the Mufti over the more moderate elements of King Abdulla of Transjordan and others, the dispatch says:

"This development has forced the Jews to change their tactics of avoiding action with the Arabs, if possible. I am informed on the highest authority that they are now preparing in readiness for attacks against all Jewish centres. The main drawback is the determination of some sections of the British police to settle accounts with the Jews before leaving."

I am not prepared to believe that the British police as a whole are determined to settle accounts with the Jews before leaving; but, in all fairness and equity, I must ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies to look into this allegation, because this may be a serious and damaging accusation against our administration in Palestine.

The dispatch continues:

"Despite the Secretariat's goodwill towards the Jewish Agency, and the apparent desire at top level not to hinder seriously Jewish defence, the growing indiscipline at the middle and the lower levels of the police is resulting in action which is handicapping to the Jews, and provoking Irgun Zvei Leumi to retaliate. It is stated that one Arab attack was staged against the Jews yesterday with the object of revealing a defence point. This was then surrounded by the British police, arms confiscated and arrests made."

If this accusation is correct, and it appears there is some collusion between the Arabs and the British authorities, I am sorry to say—I hope it is not true—it should be investigated. There appears to be collusion with a view to disarming Jews who may require arms very desperately in the future. The final paragraph I would like to read is:

"A serious movement is allegedly developing, especially in police armoured units, which are said to be determined to make the Jews pay for past attacks by terrorists. This appears to be the main cause of clashes between the Jews and the police and of searches

for
Jews
Aviv
Jews
ward
into

It
then
for
Bri
am
tha
der
Th
em
tha
wh
the
Pa
H
ye
H
to
an
lis
H
tr
pa
ar

m
H
c
r
h

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

ot and
with his
menace
that if
ary of
annels,
contact
with the
eration;
of there
ernecine

omment
g to the
e more
ulla of
dispatch

Jews to
ion with
d on the
preparing
Jewish
determi-
sh police
s before

that the
etermined
s before
equity,
e for the
tion, be-
damag-
nistration

ll towards
t desire at
y Jewish
the middle
s resulting
the Jews,
o retaliate.
was staged
e object of
was then
ice, arms

t, and it
n between
horities, I
not true—
e appears
disarming
rms very
The final
d is:

lly develop-
units, which
ke the Jews
rists. This
clashes be-
of searches

for Haganah arms which are preventing the Jews from keeping open the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road. The improved relations between Jews and British which were noticeable towards the end of last week are now relaxing into bitterness."

It has always been my contention that there exists the broadest possible grounds for amity and friendship between the British and the Jews in Palestine and I am sorry, if these accusations are correct, that there is developing again this tendency towards bitterness and hatred. There could be no more certain method employed of making terrorists of the Jews than that of withholding from them arms which they have with a view to defending themselves. I am not an authority on Palestine, but on the question of the Haganah it was stated only in the last year or so that the organisation of Haganah was formed by the British prior to the war with a view to defending itself and possibly, to defending British establishments against Arab terrorists. If Haganah was British-formed and British-trained, then it has played a very vital part in the Middle East in training units and in fighting for democracy.

In all justice and equity I would submit to the Colonial Secretary that Haganah be now legally authorised to carry arms in its own defence. I would remind my hon. Friend of the observation he made in the House a few days ago when he commended Haganah and the Jewish authorities for the restraint they had exercised in the face of terrorism by the Arabs. If he allows the Jews the responsibility to carry arms in their own defence—and for years now they have been striving to build up their home in Palestine—he will be rendering yeoman service to democracy in Palestine, to the safety of those living in Palestine and to its future well-being. But, if between now and 15th May when it is intended that we should withdraw, he allows the Jews to be defenceless and to be beaten down by Arab terrorists organised by this notorious, shameful reactionary, the Mufti, he is going to perpetrate another chapter of blood-letting in the Middle East. I know my right hon. Friend's character. I know his kindly disposition, his tolerance, his outlook and his attitude in general to these matters, and I do ask him to think over seriously all the issues which I put to him contained in this despatch. I do think it is his duty immediately to institute an inquiry into the

truth or otherwise of the dispatch I have had the opportunity of quoting to the House.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. William Whiteley): I beg to ask leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

143

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

POW. 14A

2

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

- DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

DEC 1947

145

Copies sent to:-

Cabinet Offices
 " "
 " "
 Ministry of Defence
 Treasury
 " "
 Admiralty
 " "
 " "
 War Office
 " " (M.O.4.)
 Ministry of Transport
 " " "
 Air Ministry
 " "
 Foreign Office
 " "
 " "

M. Rep. B. B.
 12-1-1947

Mr. S.E.V. Luke.
 Brigadier Cornwall-Jones.
 Cdr. W. Evershed, R.N.
 Mr. A.J. Newling.
 Mr. D.F.C. Blunt.
 Mr. W. Russell-Edmunds.
 Mr. P.N.N. Synnott.
 Capt. Maunsell.
 Capt. D.H. Hall-Thompson.
 Mr. G.C.B. Dodds.
 Brig. J.R.C. Hamilton.
 Brig. L.L. Wansbrough-Jones.
 Lt. Col. M.M. Charteris.
 Mr. B.F. Picknett.
 Mr. F.C. Rennie.
 Air Commodore Break.
 Group. Capt. V.H.B. Roth.
 Mr. B.A.B. Burrows.
 Mr. I.P. Garrahan.
 Mr. J.G.S. Beith.
 Mr. J.C. Robertson.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

146

mw.
K

Cypher (O.T.P.)

FROM PALESTINE (Gen. Sir A. Cunningham)

D. 10th December, 1947.

D. 10th Dec 1942, 1943 20.00 hrs.

IMMEDIATE

No. 2387 Secret.

15 DEC 1947

Your telegram No. 3197.

Debate in the House of Commons.

As regards general security situation there is little to add to my telegram No. 2376. Last night was quieter, and today the army took over patrolling of Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road. I have issued a warning to both communities to refrain from further disorders and you will no doubt wish to make similar appeal.

2. Your will appreciate that in the making and carrying out of arrangements for both civil and military withdrawal almost anything we do will be open to criticism as implementing or opposing partition. This is inevitable. I suggest that you stress the fact that our only (repeat only) aim is achievement of a smooth withdrawal and to avoid leaving a state of administrative economic chaos in which the people of Palestine now under our mandate would be the principal sufferers.

3. As indicated in my telegram No. 2298, the U.N. Commission may (provided that they will bear constantly in mind the points made in that telegram) look for full assistance and cooperation from the Mandatory Administration. I must, however, again point out that arrival of the Commission will certainly give rise to a wave of jubilation amongst the Jews and bitter resentment among the Arabs. Arab leaders here have stated that arrival of the Commission in Palestine will be the signal for the start of real trouble, and there is no indication that this forecast will prove untrue. Recent events have reinforced my opinion that this Government and the Commission proper could not exist side by

/ side

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

147

side except for minimum period to hand over. I do not yet know what measures the Commission would propose to take for their own security, since without substantial protection lives of themselves and their staff might not be worth much. We should lose no opportunity of making it clear that now that we foresee serious trouble in Palestine on the termination of the Mandate and that we shall accept no share of the blame for absence of implementing machinery and its consequences.

Copies sent to:-

Cabinet Offices

Ministry of Defence
Treasury

Admiralty

War Office

Ministry of Transport (M.O.4)

Air Ministry

Foreign Office

M.I.5

Foreign Office (Research Dept.)

- Mr. S.E.V. Luke.
- Brig. Cornwall Jones.
- Cdr. W. Evershed, R.N.
- Mr. A.J. Newling.
- Mr. D.F.C. Blunt.
- Mr. W. Russell-Edmunds.
- Mr. P.N.N. Synnott.
- Capt. Maunsell.
- Capt. D.H. Hall-Thompson.
- Mr. G.C.B. Dodds.
- Brig. J.R.C. Hamilton.
- Brig. L.L. Wansbrough-Jones.
- Lt. Col. M.M. Charteris.
- Mr. B.F. Picknett.
- Mr. F.C. Rennie.
- Air Commodore Brook.
- Grp. Capt. V.H.B. Roth.
- Mr. B.A.B. Burrows.
- Mr. I.P. Garrahan.
- Mr. J.G. St. Beith, M.C.
- Mr. J.C. Robertson.
- P.S. to Sir Orme Sargent.
- P.S. to Foreign Secretary.

SENT TO DEPT.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

148 18 E

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

75872/159/47

Cypher (O.T.P.)

TO PALESTINE. (General Sir A. Cunningham)

FROM S. OF S. COLONIES.

Sent 11th December, 1947. 00.45 hrs.

IMMEDIATE

No. 3225 Top Secret and Personal. Morning.

I shall open Debate in House of Commons on afternoon 11th December and inform the House that our present proposal, subject to successful negotiation with United Nations Commission, is to terminate Mandate on 15th May. I shall also make it clear that we would be unwilling to accept arrival of Commission in Palestine much before that date.

2. Grateful, if you see no objection, if you would cause representatives of Jews and Arabs in Palestine to be so informed on afternoon 11th December. Parallel action will be taken with Arab Governments by H.M. representatives at Arab posts.

Distributed to:-

R.243

Secretary of State

Sir T. Lloyd

Mr. Rees-Williams

Sir S. Caine

Sir C. Jeffries

Mr. Holding

Mr. Martin

Foreign Office

" "

No.10 Downing Street

Mr. Trafford Smith

Mr. Gutch

Mr. Mathieson

Mr. Higham

Mr. Galsworthy

Mr. Holmer

Mr. Dale

- Private Secretary.

- Mr. B.A.B. Burrows.

- P.S. to Prime Minister.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

149

13 DEC 1947

P. W.
E

O.D.

TO: 1. CANADA (GOVT.)
2. AUSTRALIA "
3. NEW ZEALAND "
4. SOUTH AFRICA "
5. NEWFOUNDLAND
6. SOUTHERN RHODESIA
7. INDIA (GOVT.)
8. PAKISTAN "

(Sent 11.00 p.m. 11th Dec., 1947.)

(1-6) G. No. 24
(7) No. 14593
(8) No. 14594

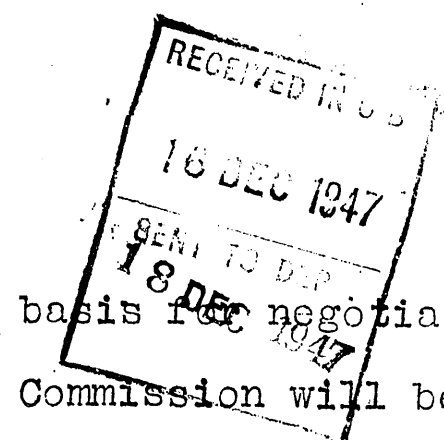
PALESTINE: DEBATE IN HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Following are extracts from opening statement made on 11th December by Colonial Secretary. Begins.

After summarising events leading up to United Nations vote in favour of partition, Mr. Creech Jones continued ".....The decision of the Assembly is regarded by His Majesty's Government as the decision of the court of international opinion.....We have no desire to create new difficulties for the United Nations or to encourage disorder and violence in Palestine, or to see undone by resulting chaos the great work our administration has performed since we took up the Mandate. We wish our authority transferred to our successors in an orderly manner and we can only express our hope that there will be by the parties a careful weighing up of the consequences of conflict and that no provocation may be indulged in by either of the principal communities concerned - indeed, that the greatest respect will be shown for the decision of international authority. That view has been widely made known to all concerned in the Middle East.

The Members of the Commission of the United Nations who are to apply the new policy have not yet been selected by their respective Governments. Our spokesman at the Assembly has not only notified the Assembly but made representations already to the Secretary General of the United Nations regarding the preliminary arrangements for the work of this Commission. The outline plan which has been made by His Majesty's Government for withdrawal has been.....put forward as a basis/

FO 371/61797



- .2 -

basis for negotiation with the Commission. We hope that the Commission will be able to accept our proposals for terminating the Mandate and for taking up their own authority in Palestine.

I repeat that His Majesty's Government intend to withdraw British troops completely from Palestine by the 1st August, 1948. In order that the withdrawal may be conducted in the most orderly manner and with the least disruption of the ordinary life of the country, it is essential that the mandatory power should retain undivided control of the country until the evacuation is well under way.

It will be appreciated that the Mandatory responsibility for Government in Palestine cannot be relinquished piecemeal. The whole complex of Governmental responsibilities must be relinquished by the Mandatory Government for the whole of Palestine on an appointed day. As I have indicated, once our military withdrawal has got properly under way the forces necessary for exercising these responsibilities will no longer be adequately available and it will therefore not be possible to retain full mandatory responsibility after a certain date. The Mandate will therefore be terminated some time in advance of the completion of withdrawal and the date we have in mind for this, subject to negotiation with the United Nations Commission, is the 15th May.

I repeat that in our view undivided control is essential until the Mandate is relinquished. As His Majesty's Government have made it clear that they cannot take part in the implementation of the United Nations' plan, it will be undesirable for the Commission to arrive in Palestine until a short period before the termination of the Mandate. For reasons of administrative efficiency and responsibility and security this overlap period should be comparatively brief. But much preliminary work can be done by the Commission outside Palestine before then. The period till then is not long if the Commission is to acquaint itself with and make suitable arrangements for the assumption of its responsibilities in Palestine.

Once/

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

151

- 3 -

Once the Mandate has been terminated, our troops remaining in Palestine will be responsible only for maintaining order in those areas of which they are still in occupation with the limited object of ensuring that their final withdrawal is not impeded and that it should be completed in the shortest possible time.

It is our purpose to cause the least possible disruption to the economy of the country and to interfere as little as possible with normal trade, especially the citrus trade. We desire to carry out an orderly withdrawal, producing the minimum of dislocation in the country and evacuating the greatest possible quantity of valuable Service stores now located there. This period till August 1st is also not too long to enable this to be done. It may be impossible to remove all our stores but obviously we must incur no more loss than is inevitable and make arrangements where possible for subsequent removal. We do not know the degree of Arab opposition to the implementation of any United Nations plan. In the withdrawal of our administration and troops we are confident that the Arabs and Jews will show restraint and not become embroiled with our people. There are counsellors of moderation among the Arabs as well as those who demand violent action - both are found in Palestine and the surrounding Arab States. There is diversion and variety of view and interest among the Arab states. But there can be little doubt that the Commission of the United Nations once it arrives in Palestine will have no little difficulty in meeting its responsibilities, in setting up the proposed Arab authorities and in enforcing the plan. The Jews in their turn are also confronted with a tremendous task during the next few years in establishing their State. It is hoped that each side will show forbearance and tolerance in a decision which in the nature of things is imposed. The Security Council may have to be invoked by the United Nations Commission if unsurmountable difficulties occur. It is disturbing that the Commission will go to its task with inadequate support for its decisions. The Palestine Arab Higher Committee has already stated it will not nurse the U.N.O. Commission in any way.

Other/

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

152

- 4 -

Other matters on which negotiations with the Commission will have to be made include the proposal in the partition plan that an area situated in the Jewish State including a sea port and hinterland shall be evacuated by 1st February, 1948. This presents a difficulty and must be studied further with the United Nations Commission for it is concerned with the thorny problem of immigration.....I do not wish to inflame deep feelings which exist among Jews and Arabs alike regarding this matter, nor do I wish to incriminate states and groups which in this illegal traffic have done infinite mischief, aroused fierce passion among the Arabs and made our task of administering the Mandate extremely difficult. We are faced with a most difficult period between now and the end of May and we hope all nations and the Jewish community will appreciate the importance of control until the Mandate is laid down. If the traffic is encouraged during the next few months a grave situation in Palestine will arise which may make an orderly withdrawal and transfer of authority extremely difficult. The camps in Cyprus have also to be emptied. The Government is aware of the strong resentment already expressed by the Arab states in regard to what may appear as encouragement to immigration for strengthening the Jewish State. It is essential that feelings should not be fired while the British administration is trying to carry through the complicated tasks essential to maintaining orderly life in Palestine. While at the same time preparing in accordance with the international decision to transfer authority I should say a few words about the future of Jerusalem and the Holy Places.....The United Nations plan provides for the setting up of a special international regime for the City of Jerusalem. The Trusteeship Council of the United Nations has been designated to discharge the responsibilities of the administering authority on behalf of the United Nations and.....is charged with the elaboration and approval of a detailed statute for the City. The Council.....has appointed a Working Committee to draft such a statute and the United Kingdom, as a member of the Trusteeship Council, has been invited to serve on this Committee. Our representative on the Council/

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

153

- 5 -

Council has accepted this invitation and will place at the disposal of the Working Committee all factual information and advice possible based on our experience.....

Up to the date of relinquishment of the Mandate the Palestine Government remain responsible for the security of Jerusalem and its Holy Places. After the termination of the Mandate it will be the responsibility of the United Nations to ensure the safety of the City and its Holy Places, a responsibility which they have assumed in their resolution approving the establishment of a special international regime for the City.....Ends.

Copy to:-

Foreign Office

Mr. I.A. Kirkpatrick
Mr. J.P.G. Finch (4)
Mr. J.G.S. Beith

1	2	3	4	5	6
1				2	

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

784

154

1947

E

11847

15 DEC

PALESTINE

Registry
Number

E11847/46/31

FROM

P.Q.

No.

W. Driberg

Dated

Received
in Registry

10 Dec
15 ~

Protection of Holy Places in Palestine
W. Driberg asked to report what action is being taken
to safeguard the Christian Holy places in Palestine
and to ensure their permanent future preservation.
In New Orleans, authorities in Palestine are taking
all necessary action, and will continue to do so until
the date is surrendered.

Last Paper

11844

References

(Minutes.)

H.B. 15/12

(Print)

(How disposed of)

(Action
completed)

J.L.M. 6/16/12

(Index)

W.D. 8/21/15

Next Paper

11890

39538

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

155 E

15 DEC

Parliamentary Question

Lab

ANSWERED 10 DEC-1947
REPLY ATTACHED.

Vincent 4/xii

Attach reply
JB Decy

(208)

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

SENT TO DEPT.

Holy Places

74. **Mr. Driberg** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies what military, diplomatic and administrative action is being taken to safeguard the Christian Holy places in Palestine during the present troubled period; and to ensure their permanent future preservation for the use of the Christian communities and as monuments of artistic and historical importance.

Mr. Rees-Williams: My right hon. Friend is satisfied that the authorities in Palestine are taking all necessary action to safeguard the Holy Places in Palestine and will continue to do so until we surrender the Mandate. No machinery yet exists for the discharge of these responsibilities after the surrender of the Mandate. The plan for the partition of Palestine approved by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House, nevertheless provides that protection of the Holy Places in the proposed City of Jerusalem shall be a special concern of the Governor of Jerusalem. He will also exercise certain powers in respect of other Holy Places in Palestine, designed to ensure that religious interests in them are properly respected.

10 DEC-1947

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference:

FO 371 / 61797

<p>• 1247</p> <p>208</p>	<p>Palestine</p> <p>EASTERN</p>	<p>E11890 /G</p> <p>15 DEC 1947</p>
<p>E11890 146/G</p> <p>F.O. Min</p> <p>Mr. Burrows</p> <p>Dated 9 Dec</p> <p>Received 15 Dec</p>	<p>Palestine Mandate: Possible leakage</p>	
<p>Last Paper</p> <p>E11493</p>	<p>(Minutes)</p> <p>H23. 15/12</p>	
<p>References</p>		
<p>(Print)</p>		
<p>(How disposed of)</p>		
<p>(Action completed)</p> <p>10/12</p>	<p>(Index)</p> <p>WJH</p>	
<p>Next Paper</p>		

34092

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

158

158

I am sorry
this was overlooked
for your Cabinet
Box this - morning.

Perhaps you
would like to
speak to the
P. M. about it
after the Defence
Committee

and
11/12

The S/S, I understand, spoke to
the P.M. about this
11/12.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

四

E-11890 letter

15 DEC 1947

150

The date of May for the termination of the mandate has been mentioned in various other newspapers, but this is, I think, the first time that the correct date of May 15th has been given. There are two other items which have not, I think, appeared elsewhere and which also suggest direct leakage. One is the transition period of two weeks before the United Nations Commission takes over. The other is the last two paragraphs about immigration. The last paragraph is not quite correct, but is near the mark, though it would not have been difficult to infer that this problem was under consideration.

I attach a copy of the Cabinet paper, which was taken by the Cabinet on December ~~3rd~~ 4th. Immediately after the Cabinet, a Foreign Office telegram No. 4203 was sent to Sir A. Cadogan in New York giving him the gist of the decisions. A copy is also attached.

The leakage is particularly embarrassing, as we have deliberately refrained from telling the Arab Governments the exact date on which we intend to lay down the mandate (because we are not absolutely sure that it may not be somewhat modified in discussion with the United Nations Commission).

John B. Furrows

9th December, 1947.

midnight
9.12.

Gov. Sargent has
asked about this

OBacco Mr Carey Foster

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

I have this part in four
Cabinet-brownings of B

S/S
I think you should
know about this -
This is not the first
time a Cabinet Paper
has leaked to the
"Observer".

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

SUNDAY OBSERVER.

7 DEC 1947

Cuttin. Dated.....

Mandate Surrender On May 15

U.N. Told Britain's Intentions

By A MILITARY CORRESPONDENT

THE Cabinet has instructed Sir Alexander Cadogan to inform the Commission for Palestine, appointed by the United Nations Assembly, that Britain proposes to surrender her Mandate on May 15, 1948.

There should then be a transition period of two weeks, during which the United Nations Commission would instal provisional government in the Jewish and Arab States of Palestine and assume responsibility for law and order.

Uneasy Respite From Rioting In Jerusalem

From Patrick O'Donovan

JERUSALEM, December 6
IN Jerusalem the heavy hangover from a week's violence is beginning to lift.

Food convoys are coming into the city. The curfew has been raised. Soldiers can once again wander round the shops. Arabs in soiled linen garments have begun again to empty stinking garbage cans.

A degree of normality has returned to the Holy City, but the 56 dead—almost equally divided between Jews and Arabs—and the uncounted wounded have left their scar.

Jerusalem has an unquiet air. Today there are groups of Jews watching, silent like miners at a disaster, across the single strands of Danert wire cutting off the new commercial quarter which was set alight on Wednesday. Blue, acrid smoke still curls up in the sunshine from burned Jewish shops, and the young, untried soldiers from English county regiments have an embarrassed air as they fidget with their Sten guns beneath these stares.

Incident

Outside Barclays Bank—reminder of Threadneedle Street, with marble pillars, bronze grills, and polished floors—I saw, quite by chance, a young Jew sprinting with his mouth gaping, his eyes fixed and stupid. A dozen Arabs, 19-year-olds with their skirts lifted, raced in pursuit. He fled past the smart photographer's, past "the best place to get shirts," and outside a sweet shop he tripped and fell.

A young Arab with a short stick beat at his head through the Jew's protecting arms. The others kicked at the tangle. Arabs hurried forward from up and down the street. The young Jew was bleeding and moaning when the police arrived and cleared the Arabs away with bland, familiar English constabulary gestures.

There were two arrests. The lad with the stick escaped.

But in Jerusalem this was merely an incident and a symptom that now shocks only the stranger.

Armed Traffic

This bottomless ill-will is being held in strict control. About half the traffic seems to consist of 15 cwt. trucks filled variously with armed Palestine police or untidy British soldiers or more picturesque Trans-jordan Frontier Force men in spiked topees, and the Arab Legion in fringed and coloured headcloths.

Every soldier carries a rifle or Sten gun over his shoulder.

At every entrance to the fortified zones a youngster waits in a sand-bag niche with a Bren gun and a pile of loaded magazines at his elbow.

Jewish and the Arab Palestine States should be formally constituted on June 1, 1948.

There has been no change in the decision to complete the military withdrawal by August 1, but all these proposals, in so far as they affect the United Nations Commission, are still subject to its approval. It is expected that the Commission's reply will be available before the Parliamentary debate next Thursday.

Haifa Beach-head

It is emphasised that the Mandate will not be surrendered piecemeal, and that it is scheduled that on May 15 British administration in the whole of Palestine, military and civil, will cease to be responsible for public law and order.

It is officially explained that by May 15 the Army will already have withdrawn from some areas in Palestine, and on that day all British police in Palestine service will also be withdrawn.

The Army, it is hoped, will have been concentrated in a "beach-head" around Haifa, will be responsible only for its own security after May 15, and will not maintain general law and order in the areas within which it is stationed.

The normal interim security arrangements between May 15 and June 1 are expected, in official quarters, to present no difficulties in the Jewish State area where Haganah will then assume formal responsibility. The problem is more difficult in Arab areas, and agreement is still being sought which would allow the Arab Legion to maintain security at least temporarily. The Transjordan Prime Minister is expected in London to discuss these matters, but the other Arab States make no secret of their opposition to this arrangement.

Immigration Problem

Policy on Jewish immigration into Palestine until May 15 has still to be decided.

An arrangement is under consideration which would allow for the transfer to Palestine of the 16,000 immigrants now in Cyprus, by February 1, and which would subsequently allow immigration into Palestine at the rate of not more than 10,000 per month, until the Jewish State takes over.—Copyright.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

Mandate Surrender On May 15

U.N. Told Britain's Intentions

By A MILITARY CORRESPONDENT

THE Cabinet has instructed Sir Alexander Cadogan to inform the Commission for Palestine, appointed by the United Nations Assembly, that Britain proposes to surrender her Mandate on May 15, 1948.

There should then be a transition period of two weeks, during which the United Nations Commission would instal provisional government in the Jewish and Arab States of Palestine and assume responsibility for law and order.

Uneasy Respite From Rioting In Jerusalem

From Patrick O'Donovan

JERUSALEM, December 6
IN Jerusalem the heavy hangover from a week's violence is beginning to lift.

Food convoys are coming into the city. The curfew has been raised. Soldiers can once again wander round the shops. Arabs in soiled linen garments have begun again to empty stinking garbage cans.

A degree of normality has returned to the Holy City, but the 56 dead—almost equally divided between Jews and Arabs—and the uncounted wounded have left their scar.

Jerusalem has an unquiet air. Today there are groups of Jews watching, silent like miners at a disaster, across the single strands of Danert wire cutting off the new commercial quarter which was set alight on Wednesday. Blue, acrid smoke still curls up in the sunshine from burned Jewish shops, and the young, untried soldiers from English county regiments have an embarrassed air as they fidget with their Sten guns beneath these stares.

Incident

Outside Barclays Bank—reminder of Threadneedle Street, with marble pillars, bronze grills, and polished floors—I saw, quite by chance, a young Jew sprinting with his mouth gaping, his eyes fixed and stupid. A dozen Arabs, 19-year-olds with their skirts lifted, raced in pursuit. He fled past the smart photographer's, past "the best place to get shirts," and outside a sweet shop he tripped and fell.

A young Arab with a short stick beat at his head through the Jew's protecting arms. The others kicked at the tangle. Arabs hurried forward from up and down the street. The young Jew was bleeding and moaning when the police arrived and cleared the Arabs away with bland, familiar English constabulary gestures.

There were two arrests. The lad with the stick escaped.

But in Jerusalem this was merely an incident and a symptom that now shocks only the stranger.

Armed Traffic

This bottomless ill-will is being held in strict control. About half the traffic seems to consist of 15 cwt. trucks filled variously with armed Palestine police or untidy British soldiers or more picturesque Trans-jordan Frontier Force men in spiked topees, and the Arab Legion in fringed and coloured headcloths.

Every soldier carries a rifle or Sten gun over his shoulder.

At every entrance to the fortified zones a youngster waits in a sand-bag niche with a Bren gun and a pile of loaded magazines at his elbow.

Immediate large-scale rioting is over. Officials are assuring one another that little more will happen till the British leave. Jews and Palestinian Arabs are waiting for greater powers to move. Talk is all of armies on the frontier and of the real strength of Haganah. That the test of strength will eventually come, there seems in Jerusalem to be no doubt at all.—Copyright.

Jewish and the Arab Palestine States should be formally constituted on June 1, 1948.

There has been no change in the decision to complete the military withdrawal by August 1, but all these proposals, in so far as they affect the United Nations Commission, are still subject to its approval. It is expected that the Commission's reply will be available before the Parliamentary debate next Thursday.

Haifa Beach-head

It is emphasised that the Mandate will not be surrendered piecemeal, and that it is scheduled that on May 15 British administration in the whole of Palestine, military and civil, will cease to be responsible for public law and order.

It is officially explained that by May 15 the Army will already have withdrawn from some areas in Palestine, and on that day all British police in Palestine service will also be withdrawn.

The Army, it is hoped, will have been concentrated in a "beach-head" around Haifa, will be responsible only for its own security after May 15, and will not maintain general law and order in the areas within which it is stationed.

The normal interim security arrangements between May 15 and June 1 are expected, in official quarters, to present no difficulties in the Jewish State area where Haganah will then assume formal responsibility. The problem is more difficult in Arab areas, and agreement is still being sought which would allow the Arab Legion to maintain security at least temporarily. The Transjordan Prime Minister is expected in London to discuss these matters, but the other Arab States make no secret of their opposition to this arrangement.

Immigration Problem

Policy on Jewish immigration into Palestine until May 15 has still to be decided.

An arrangement is under consideration which would allow for the transfer to Palestine of the 16,000 immigrants now in Cyprus, by February 1, and which would subsequently allow immigration into Palestine at the rate of not more than 10,000 per month, until the Jewish State takes over.—Copyright.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Group.....10

Class 211

Piece 01111

Following document(s)*

~~retained in the Department of origin*~~

transferred to PRO Safe Room*

E11898/46/31

and closed until..... 1 / 1 - 1 8

***delete as necessary**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

788

E

11920

16 DEC

1947

PALESTINE

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E11920/46/31

Planning

Stockholm

54/165/47

8 Dec
16 -Palestine Situationtransmit report of speech about Palestine
by M. Tardieu Sandstrom on 2 Dec

Last Paper

11898

(Minutes.)

References

We have not yet received the
1947 personalities apparently.
I have not been able to secure
it.

(Print)

N. Sept - M 18/12

JB Dec. 17

(How disposed of)

(Action
completed)

(Index)

JCM 23/12

Next Paper

11921

39538

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

54/165/47

E 11920

16 DEC

BRITISH EMBASSY,

STOCKHOLM.

8th December, 1947.

Dear Department,

You may be interested to see the enclosed report of a speech about Palestine made by Mr. Justice Sandström on 2nd December. The report is the work of our Information Department and appeared as a supplement to their Daily Press Summary of 3rd December.

You will find Sandström's name in the Ambassador's report on Swedish Personalities for 1947.

Yours ever,

STOCKHOLM CHANCERY

Northern Department,
Foreign Office.

162
E

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Supplement to Press Summary No.279

JUSTICE SANDSTRÖM'S TALK ON PALESTINE

289

E

711321

1947

PALESTINE

16 DEC

16A

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E11921/46/31

F.O. Minute

M. F.K. Roberts

11 Dec
16 ~

Palestine Debate

Transmits notes for Secretary of State's speech
in the House of Commons Palestine debate
also text of speech by Colonial Secretary
in the same debate.

Last Paper.

11920 (11844)

(Minutes.)

The year of ...

H.B. 14/12

References.

In P.P. F.O. Minute M. Beich 21/1
4, Feb
- E.P.C (48) 5 M/9

(Print.)

JB Feb 9

(How disposed of.)

del. w' Jan 12927
Rptd. New York. 1341.
Dec 13

(Action
completed.)

(Index)

G.M. 16/12

8/1/48

Next Paper.

11922

29470 F.O.P.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Nothing to be Written in this Margin.

11921

DEC

Minutes.

165 Encl^s

PALESTINE
DEBATE

Secretary of State.

I submit some notes for your Palestine speech by Mr. Wright and Mr. Burrows. They have, of course, concentrated on the Arab side and are most anxious that you should say as much as possible on the lines of the brief with a view to keeping the Arabs as sweet as possible.

Please see also N Burrows' late minute at Play A showing that the Drags are wrong.

OBERTS

11th December, 1947.

We have since received the text behind of the Colonial Secretary's opening speech. You will notice that it includes a generous tribute to Sir A. Cadogan & the E.O. officials concerned with Palestine. You may wish to include in your speech some kind words about the E.O. people & to echo the Colonial Secretary's appreciation of British officials, police etc in Palestine.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

A. 166

Notes for Secretary of State's speech in
Palestine debate.

"Why did we refer the Palestine question to the United Nations? Because our attempts at settlement for the past twenty-eight years had been finally defeated by the irreconcilable gulf between the two peoples.

"This not only made it impossible to carry out the objectives of the mandate - a Jewish national home without prejudice to the rights of the existing inhabitants - but it also made impossible the devolution of our authority and the establishment of representative institutions. We could never find a formula on which both sides would join in elections.

"I need not rehearse the long history of the various Commissions we have set up and proposals we have made, all with the simple object of installing in Palestine an agreed and democratic system of self-government. Our last attempt was when nearly a year ago we tried to bring Jews and Arabs together here and put forward the two sets of proposals known as the Bevin and Morrison plans. These provided for a cantonal system with considerable local autonomy. Neither side accepted it then, though the Arabs put forward something extremely like it in their later than eleventh hour attempt to avert partition in New York. If they had accepted it here in February events might have followed a different course.

"Now the United Nations have made their recommendation/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

167

recommendation. While generally accepted by the Jews it has been totally rejected by the Arab States. We have no obligation under the Mandate or any other agreement to set up an Arab or Jewish State by force or to coerce one community in the interests of the other. We shall not obstruct the United Nations, but in withdrawing from Palestine we shall take great care not to become responsible as we go for enforcing this or any other settlement not accepted by both Arabs and Jews. We feel that we have the right to demand in return that our withdrawal is not disturbed by either side. We shall have to maintain law and order until the mandate is terminated. That period will be as short as is physically possible, and during it we shall continue to hold the balance as we have always tried to do. We shall resist with all our power disturbers of the peace from whatever quarter they come. In the short period between the termination of the mandate and completion of our evacuation we shall no longer have this responsibility and will only take what steps may be necessary for the protection and speedy evacuation of our troops and stores.

"Thus far it is possible to speak with assurance. We shall be in charge and we know what we shall do. But I shall no doubt be expected to say something of what will come after. We assume that we shall hand over to a United Nations Commission who will have arrived in Palestine shortly before the termination of our civil authority there. No British forces or administration will be available to them as their instruments/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

3148 Wt. 26469/137 50m 9/46 (51) F.&S.

[It is suggested that this sentence should only be used if it is necessary to reply to enquiries and speculations about the way in which U.N. settlement will be enforced, or about the competence of the Security Council in the matter.]

168

instruments for enforcing partition. The United Nations Commission is apparently not to have any external force at its command, but intends to rely on Arab and Jewish militias formed in Palestine. [It would be idle and dangerous to speculate at this stage whether the Commission will be able to carry out its task with the help of these forces, or whether, as has been suggested in some quarters, there will have to be a reference to the Security Council, and if so, with what result.] It is not for us to lecture either side on their responsibilities. It has always been and still remains our greatest wish that a settlement by agreement might eventually be reached. This is still unfortunately a long way from being in sight. If at any later stage we can usefully help to compose the differences between the two sides we shall of course be ready to do so. That stage has not yet arrived.

"All this does not mean in any way that we shall disinterest ourselves from the Palestine problem or from the Middle East. To the Jews I would say: "You have been "successful in obtaining international backing "for your claims and plans in Palestine. We "sympathise with the terrible fate which has "overtaken so many of your compatriots in "Europe and we understand your desire for "security. We admire your achievements, but "having achieved ~~complete~~ success at the "United Nations, it is now up to you to take the/

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

169.

"the first step in restoring harmony in Palestine.

"Sooner or later, some state of affairs must be

"reached which will allow the inhabitants of that

"country to live in peace. The sooner this

"comes about, the better for all concerned, and

"most of all for the Jews themselves." ~~It is~~

~~NP. It is~~
~~even more necessary to say a word of comfort to our~~

~~On the other hand the Arabs may be~~
~~Arab friends, who no realize are feeling that the majority of~~

~~the United Nations have~~
~~everyone has turned against them and who fear~~

that they have been left ~~alone~~ to face what they

feel is an invasion of their homelands. I

cannot speak of their relations with other Powers,

but I can perhaps usefully say a few words about

our own past and future relations with them.

We have been attacked in the past for "imperialism".

In fact the main result of our presence in the Middle

East, has been the establishment of independent

States in that area. It is only because of the

local dissensions in Palestine that we have not been

able to complete our work by aiding in the

establishment of an independent and self-governing

Palestine. Apart from these achievements in the

political field, we claim to have brought great

material benefits to various Middle Eastern countries

by our commercial experience and technical

contribution. We believe that we can still make

a great contribution to the Middle East on these

lines and we are firmly determined to continue

to make available to the greatest possible measure

such technical advice and help as may be required

by the Governments concerned, the benefit of our

administrative experience, either by the loan of

officials for specific purposes or by means of

visits/

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

170

visits to this country of Middle Eastern administrators, and, last but by no means least, our thoroughgoing co-operation in defence matters. It is no doubt difficult for the Arabs to realise at this moment, when their feelings are so acutely stirred by the Palestine question, that there are other wider aspects of affairs which may, in the long run, claim a still more intense share of their attention. It is our hope ~~that by disentangling ourselves from the Palestine question we may remove the last~~ ^{all} obstacle to full and frank partnership in all these matters between ourselves and the Arab countries. We shall continue to watch with the greatest interest and to assist in the greatest measure that our resources permit any schemes of development and social reform which are being undertaken, or may be undertaken, in the countries of the Middle East. We have treaty arrangements with some of the countries concerned, which we hope to develop to take account of changed circumstances and of the regional security of the Middle East as a whole.

If it is necessary to reply to questions about the supply of arms to the Middle East, the following passage is suggested:-

"We have treaty obligations with various Middle East States to supply them with war material needed for internal security and defence tasks. In view of the possibilities of/

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

171

of trouble in the Middle East, we decided recently that all orders for war material from Middle East countries would be very carefully scrutinised. In deciding whether such orders are to be accepted, we shall naturally take into account the possibility of the war material concerned being used in Palestine.

"Import of arms into Palestine itself will continue to be controlled by the Palestine Government while the mandate continues. Thereafter it will be the responsibility of the United Nations Commission.

"The British forces intend to abandon no weapons or warlike stores in Palestine as they withdraw."

If it is necessary to reply to questions about the future of the Arab Legion and Transjordan Frontier Force, the following words are suggested:-

"Units of the Arab Legion have for some time been serving in Palestine under the orders of the British G.O.C., in accordance with a long-standing arrangement with King Abdullah, for which we are most grateful. These units will be withdrawn from Palestine at the same time as British forces are withdrawn and their withdrawal will be complete when the withdrawal of British forces is complete.

"The future of the Transjordan Frontier Force, which is a British colonial force not owing allegiance to Transjordan, is under discussion."

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1
2
3
4
5
6

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
Reference: FO 371/61797

172 B

Leech House

With the compliments of
the Private Secretary

11th December 1947

1	2	3	4	5	6
1				2	

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
Reference: **FO 371/61797**

On November 29 The Assembly of the United Nations

Palestine was last discussed in this House shortly before the Committee which had been set up by the Special Assembly of the United Nations had reported. The efforts which have been made by the Government in recent years to secure some reconciliation of interests of Jews and Arabs inside the Mandate and the various schemes submitted in the hope of establishing political cooperation and security in Palestine are now a matter of history and have received the attention of the House. Parliament is also fully aware of the reasons which finally led to the reference of the Palestine problem to the United Nations

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371 / 61797

Nations and I need not cover that ground again. In all these discussions - in fact, ever since the ¹⁷⁴abandonment of partition recommendations made by the Peel Commission - ^{within the form} the solution envisaged was ~~one inside~~ of a unitary state - expressed from time to time in a variety of forms - with Jews and Arabs sharing in government. The Government found nothing in the Mandate to entitle it to impose by force on either community a solution unacceptable to the other. As my Rt. Hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary told the House on February 18, 1947 "if the conflict has to be resolved by arbitrary decision that is not a decision which H.M.G. are empowered as Mandatory to take". It was obvious that in the absence of agreement and ^{because of} the irreconcilable nature of the interests involved not only was the Mandate unworkable but also in its place ^{to cover the period} and until Palestine achieved independence no trusteeship agreement could be made. The Government felt, nevertheless, that every effort should be made to win a settlement without recourse to force. The violence of the past weeks fully confirms the Government in the steps it took to try

1
2
1
3
4
5
2
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

175
try and obtain from the two communities concerned some mutual accommodation inside or outside the Mandate.

The perpetuation of the Mandate regime implied increasingly active and costly military commitments and a situation deteriorating by lawlessness, terrorism and non-cooperation by the Jewish community with the Government. ^{and yet} ~~In fact~~ the Mandate did not require us to establish either a Jewish state or an Arab state in Palestine by force or to coerce either people in the interest of the other.

By
~~With the~~ reference of the question of Palestine to the United Nations we asked that organisation to make an unfettered examination of the problem. For reasons I have previously given to the House we suggested no particular solution. We gave all possible assistance to the Special Committee appointed to study the problem. I pointed out to the House on August 12 that "our sincerity as a nation was manifest by our reference of the problem to the United Nations."

Sir

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

176

● Sir Alexander Cadogan also expressly stated to the United Nations at the time, that the United Kingdom ^{ought} ^{to} ~~should~~ not have the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience."

in due course

The Special Committee reported to the Assembly that the Mandate should be terminated, and that Palestine should proceed to independence. A majority of the Committee favoured a partition plan. The substance of the Report is known to the House. Without any loss of time, on September 26, the Government informed the United Nations that we would surrender the Mandate and that we agreed that Palestine should enjoy independent status. I made it clear at Lake Success that the British Government was not prepared to impose by force of arms a settlement which was not acceptable to both the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine and that in the absence of such a settlement, it must plan for the early withdrawal of British forces and administration from Palestine. I should

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

177

should also add that in the discussions at the United Nations I re-emphasised that I could not easily imagine circumstances in which the United Kingdom would wish to prevent the application of a settlement recommended by the Assembly. Nor did I fail to assert that H.M.G. would not carry sole or major responsibility for the administration of Palestine and for enforcing changes which the United Nations regarded as necessary. I made every effort to persuade delegations that enforcement must be regarded as an integral part of any new policy by the United Nations in Palestine.

The announcement of our intention to end the Mandate and withdraw our forces was universally welcomed. All subsequent study of the Special Committee's Reports and the Palestine problem proceeded with the position of H.M.G. well understood by the Delegations at the Assembly.

During

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

178
During these discussions ~~proposals by various powers~~

~~proposed earlier~~
~~were made~~ that the British administration and forces

should continue in Palestine for security reasons

while a partition policy was being applied or that

Britain should transfer its authority direct to the

respective Arab and Jewish States proposed or that there

should be a period in which both the British and the

United Nations Authority ^{should operate} while the latter was imposing

a partition scheme ~~should operate~~. All such proposals

were inconsistent with the policy H.M.G. had declared

and were sometimes calculated to entangle Britain

in shaping, and ^{accepting} responsibility for, the schemes

evolved and ~~for~~ maintaining British arms to enforce any

scheme determined ~~on~~.

We have been criticised for this attitude of refusing to

depart from the principles which H.M.G. laid down. In

all this work we have ^{sought to be} ~~not been negative but have been~~

cooperative. and to avoid a negative attitude

whether in the work of the Main Committee or the two
Sub-Committees, one concerned with the plan ^{for} a
unitary State and the other with the plan
of partition

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO

371/61797

1579

Our officials and delegates gave all help in their power to the several sub and other committees which worked on this question. They provided factual information relevant to the matters under discussion based on our experience. But frequently, they had to remind the Committees of the position and declarations of H.M.G.

Before the conclusion of the discussions, Sir Alexander Cadogan announced that the withdrawal of our forces and administration would be effected by August 1, 1948 and that so long as British troops remained in any part of Palestine they would maintain law and order in the areas of which they were still in occupation. A civil administration would not necessarily be maintained by H.M.G. throughout this period. We reserved the right to lay down the Mandate and to bring civil administration to an end at any time. H.M.G. would not wish to impede the implementation of any scheme approved by the General Assembly.

It

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2			

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

180

It is important that I should emphasise that we have been actuated by the desire to bring the parties concerned to a realisation of the grave reactions which may arise in Palestine with the withdrawal of British administration and how imperative a settlement between the two communities was. If H.M.G. was persuaded that its only proper course was to withdraw from Palestine particularly in view of the dangers and losses experienced by our forces and the necessity on financial and political grounds of ending commitments in Palestine - it certainly did not wish to leave Palestine in disorder after the tremendous and costly contribution it had made in developing Palestine and discharging its responsibilities under the Mandate.

Right up to the last at the United Nations our delegates therefore directed attention to the problem of implementing and enforcing any scheme decided on and the fact that British troops could not be used as the instrument of the United Nations for enforcing

a

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

181

● decision against either community. The House will agree I am sure that this was in accordance with the mood of the country as well as being politically wise. We were now surrendering an international instrument, and transferring authority quite properly to the appropriate international authority. That body was now engaged in determining the status of Palestine in the future and the form its structure of government should take. It was not for Britain to take up again the heavy commitments, after it had given so much, of bringing ^{the new order} into being in the face of new conflict, ~~the new order~~.

It is a tragic fact that no conciliation of the conflicting interests of Jews and Arabs was possible at Lake Success. The long debates were sometimes recriminatory but the open debate demonstrated to the world the intractable nature of the problem and the intransigent character of the parties. The plan which emerged is bitterly opposed by a strong minority ^{of the United Nations} which denies the justice of the decision.

It

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

182

^{make provision}
● It ~~provides~~ little for enforcement. Difficulties which may arise in Palestine may be referred to the Security Council for consideration and instructions. The substitute authority - the United Nations Commission of five drawn from five ~~smallest~~ ^{stages} - will assume administrative responsibility and transfer authority directly to what governments or authorities it may create in Palestine. A state of Jerusalem will be created under the administrative responsibility of the Trusteeship Council and it is proposed that a sea port and hinterland in the Jewish area should be evacuated at an early stage to permit a substantial immigration. The boundaries ^{of the new state} have been varied in important details from those recommended in the Special Committee's partition report. It is not for me at this stage to examine the proposals in this scheme ~~except that~~ I would like to mention that certain of the essential features hark back to the various ideas repressed in the schemes associated with the names of my Rt. Hon. Friends the Lord President and the Foreign Secretary. But it

was

It has been adopted by the Assembly and possibly certain aspects of it may have to be modified in the light of experience

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

183

as not until the recent meetings at Lake Success that
the Jewish community officially ^{announced any acceptance of} accepted the device of
partition.

~~The validity of the decision of the Assembly must be~~
~~accepted.~~ During the many debates the competence of
the Assembly to take any action along the lines now
adopted was challenged on legal grounds but the Assembly
has ~~quoted~~, has offered its advice and taken steps for
action to proceed as it ^{has} directed. The Assembly was told
that we would not obstruct any decision taken and its
resolution would be loyally accepted insofar as its terms
did not conflict with the conditions H.M.G. had
announced during the discussions. The decision of the
Assembly ^{is regarded} ~~has been accepted~~ by H.M.G. as the decision of
the court of international opinion. ^{this} ~~It~~ is not a
grudging acceptance as a distinguished newspaper suggested.
We have no desire to create new difficulties for the
United Nations or to encourage disorder and violence in
Palestine

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

184

● Palestine, or to see undone by resulting chaos the
great work our administration has performed since we
● took up the Mandate. We wish our authority transferred
to our successors in an orderly manner and we can
only express our hope that there will be ^{by the parties} a careful
weighing up of the consequences of conflict and that
no provocation may be indulged in by either of the
principal communities concerned - indeed, that the
greatest respect will be shown for the decision of
international authority. That view has been widely
made known to all concerned in the Middle East.

The Members of the Commission of the United Nations who
are to apply the new policy have not yet been
selected by their respective Governments. Our spokes-
man at the Assembly has not only notified the Assembly
but made representations already ^{to the Sec Gen. of the UN. Assembly} regarding the
preliminary arrangements for the work of this
Commission. The outline plan which has been made by
H.M.G. for withdrawal has been communicated to the ^{him}
United

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

185

United Nations and put forward as a basis for negotiation with the Commission. We hope that the Commission will be able to accept our proposals for terminating the Mandate and ^{to} taking up their own authority in Palestine.

I repeat that H.M.G. intend to withdraw British troops ~~including all Arab troops~~ completely from Palestine by the 1st August, 1948. In order that the withdrawal may be conducted in the most orderly manner and with the least disruption of the ordinary life of the country, it is essential that the mandatory power should retain undivided control of the country until the evacuation is well under way. ~~So long as we retain undivided control of the country the Mandate will remain, and we will be responsible for order.~~

It will be appreciated that the Mandatory responsibility for Government in Palestine cannot be relinquished piecemeal. The whole complex of Governmental responsibilities

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

186

responsibilities must be relinquished by the Mandatory Government for the whole of Palestine on an appointed day. ^{As I have indicated} Once our military withdrawal has got properly under way the forces necessary for exercising these responsibilities will not longer be adequately available and it will therefore not be possible to retain full mandatory responsibility after a certain date. The Mandate will therefore be terminated some time in advance of the completion of withdrawal and the date we have in mind for this, subject to negotiation with the United Nations Commission, is the 15th May.

^{I repeat that} In our view undivided control is essential until the Mandate is relinquished. As H.M.G. have made it clear that they can not take part in the implementation of the United Nations' plan it will be undesirable for the Commission to arrive in Palestine until ^{a short period} ~~shortly - say a few weeks~~ - before the termination of the Mandate. For reasons of administrative

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	2	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

187

administrative efficiency and responsibility and security this overlap period should be comparatively brief. But much preliminary work can be done by the Commission outside Palestine before then as I shall explain. The period till then is not long if the Commission is to acquaint itself with and make suitable arrangements for ^{the assumption of} its responsibilities in Palestine.

Once the Mandate has been terminated, our troops remaining in Palestine will be responsible only for maintaining order in those areas of which they are still in occupation with the limited object of ensuring that their final withdrawal is not impeded and that it should be completed in the shortest possible time.

The House would not wish me for security reasons to enter into the details of the plan of withdrawal of our forces. It is our purpose to cause the least possible

1	2	3	4	5	6
1				2	

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

188

possible disruption to the economy of the country and to interfere as little as possible with normal trade, especially the citrus trade. We desire to carry out an orderly withdrawal, producing the minimum of dislocation in the country and evacuating the greatest possible quantity of valuable Service stores ^{now} located in ^{there} Palestine. The period till August 1 ^{also} is not too long to enable this to be done. It may be impossible to remove all our stores but obviously we must incur no more loss than is inevitable and make arrangements where possible for subsequent removal. We do not know the degree of Arab opposition to the implementation of any United Nations plan. In the withdrawal of our administration and troops we are confident that the ^{and Jews} Arabs will show restraint and not become embroiled with our people. There are councillors of moderation among the Arabs as well as ^{through} demands for violent action - both ^{are found} in Palestine and the surrounding Arab States. There is diversion and variety of view and interest among the Arab states. But there can be little doubt that

the

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

189

the Commission of the United Nations once it arrives
in Palestine will have ^{no little} considerable difficulty in
meeting ^{its} their responsibilities, in setting up the
proposed Arab authorities and in enforcing the plan.
The Jews in their turn are ^{also} confronted with a
tremendous task during the next few years in
establishing their State. It is hoped that each side
will show forbearance and tolerance in a decision
which in the nature of things is imposed. The
Security Council may have to be invoked by the United
Nations Commission if insurmountable difficulties
occur. It is disturbing that the Commission will go
to its task with inadequate support for its decisions.
The Palestine Arab Higher Committee has already
stated it will not nurse the U.N.O. Commission in any
way.

Other matters on which negotiations with the Commission
will have to be made include the proposal in the
partition plan that an area situated in the Jewish
State including ^a sea port and hinterland shall

be

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

190
be evacuated by 1st February, 1948. This presents a
difficult and must be studied further ^{with the UN Commission} for it is
concerned with the thorny problem of immigration
about which I shall say something in a few minutes.

It is difficult in a statement such as this to discuss the
many matters on which negotiation with the Commission
will be necessary. There are the complicated facts
associated with the finances of the country - the
commitments and liabilities - the position of the
assets, the service of the public debt, the
responsibilities to the services and so on. I can
assure the House that we shall wind up our affairs in
Palestine in a fair and reasonable manner and I hope
with little suspicion and illfeeling about the
transactions and the arrangements we ~~have to~~ make.
We have to grant reasonable and just terms to the
services which have been built up in Palestine -
problems involving pension and gratuity rights and
compensation benefits, and we have to try and absorb

in

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

191

in other services many of the personnel involved.
We have studied the situation of the Palestine Police Force and I hope before long that I may be able to inform the House of the decisions reached on this and other Colonial Service questions. Some of these matters must be explored with the United Nations Commission at an early date ~~as well as, of course,~~ the arrangements with successor authorities for the custody and evacuation of stores which we shall have been unable to evacuate before our final departure.

There are also questions concerning the interests of our national ^{public} and important ^{works of course}

I should also add that with the withdrawal of our civil administration political officers to cooperate with our troops will be left behind until their withdrawal. After that it may be desirable that political officers may be attached to the various governing authorities set up, in order to assist British interests.

As

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

192

The arrival in Palestine of
 I have indicated, we hope that the United Nations
 Commission will ~~frankly recognise that its arrival~~
 and ~~assumption of authority in Palestine are likely~~
~~to lead to a grave state of tension in the country -~~
may create
 and lead
 possibly to disorders which may not only involve us
 but also interfere with our withdrawal. We are
 confident that some of these difficulties can be
 prevented by a clear recognition of each others
 problem and a great deal of preparatory negotiation
The Commission reaches Palestine
 before ~~Palestine is reached.~~

Perhaps I should say a word about the state of order in the country today
 During the period ~~Between~~ now and the termination of the
 Mandate, the ^{British} ~~mandatory~~ Government in Palestine will,
 as I have said, remain responsible for law and order.
 There have been serious disturbances in Palestine
 since the United Nations decision was announced due
^{mainly} to Arab resentment. Arab attacks on Jews have been in
 the main sporadic and without central direction, but ~~th~~
 they have nevertheless involved serious loss of life.
 Violent Jewish reaction to these attacks has further
 inflamed

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

193

inflamed the situation. The greatest efforts have been made, mainly by the ~~British section of the Palestine police~~, to prevent communal strife.

The greatest danger of communal disturbances arise in mixed areas, e.g. Jerusalem and Haifa. In order to strengthen the British police for action in these areas all British personnel are being withdrawn from the purely Jewish area of Tel Aviv, Petah Tikvah and Ramat Gan. Their place is being taken by ~~the~~ Jewish ~~Police in the zone and a~~ guard force called Mishmar which will operate under the direction of the Government of Palestine and solely within that area for the protection of Jewish life and property against terror attacks. A similar Arab municipal police force is being formed for Jaffa under arrangements now being made in Palestine.

It has been made clear by the High Commissioner to leaders of the Jewish and Arab communities that so long as the Mandate continues the mandatory Government

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	2	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

194
Government is responsible for law and order in Palestine and will do its duty to protect the life and property of citizens irrespective of race. The Palestine Government ^{will continue} ~~intends~~ to maintain the strictest impartiality during this period.

It is vital to the future of Palestine that neither community there should allow its passions to become inflamed and ^{that} ~~for~~ ^{should not} ~~lead~~ to further reprisals until chaos supervenes with disastrous effects on the economy of the country and the life of every citizen.

I was asked some days ago about the return to Palestine of British women and children. No more wives and families will be returned to Palestine after the 1st January, 1948.

I should now say a few words on the problem of immigration. I do not wish to inflame deep feelings which exist among Jews and Arabs alike regarding this

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

195

this matter, nor do I wish to incriminate states and groups which in the illegal traffic have done infinite mischief, aroused fierce passion among the Arabs and made our task of administering the Mandate extremely difficult. We are faced with a most difficult period between now and the end of May and we hope all nations and the Jewish community will appreciate the importance of control until the Mandate is laid down. If the traffic is encouraged during the next few months a grave situation in Palestine will arise which may make an orderly withdrawal and transfer of authority extremely difficult. The camps in Cyprus have also to be emptied. The Government is aware of the strong resentment already expressed by the Arab states in regard to what may appear as encouragement to immigration for strengthening the Jewish state. It is essential that feelings should not be fired while the British administration is trying to carry through the complicated tasks essential to maintaining orderly life in Palestine, *while at the same time preparing in accordance with international decision to transfer authority.* ~~For some months the quota cannot be abandoned.~~

I

1
2
1
3
4
5
2
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

196

should ^{also} say a few words about the future of Jerusalem and the Holy Places because of the public interest which has been shown in the matter. The United Nations plan provides for the setting up of a special international regime for the City of Jerusalem. The Trusteeship Council of the United Nations has been designated to discharge the responsibilities of the administering authority on behalf of the United Nations. The area to be covered by this special regime includes the present municipality of Jerusalem and some of the surrounding villages and towns. Bethlehem is included. A Governor for the City is to be appointed by the Trusteeship Council and will be responsible to it. The protection of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites located in the City of Jerusalem will be one of his special concerns. He will also be charged with supervision of the observance by the successor Arab and Jewish States of the requirement to be written into their statutes that they will guarantee the preservation of the Holy Places and religious buildings in their

states

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

197
states and liberty of access to these places for religious purposes.

The Trusteeship Council is charged with the elaboration and approval of a detailed statute for the City. The Council which is sitting now has appointed a Working Committee to draft such a statute and the United Kingdom, as a member of the Trusteeship Council, has been invited to serve on this Committee. Our representative on the Council has accepted this invitation and will place at the disposal of the Working Committee all factual information and advice possible based on our experience. The Committee has already begun its work.

Up to the date of relinquishment of the mandate the ^{Palestine} ~~Mandatory~~ Government remain responsible for the security of Jerusalem and its holy places. After the termination of the mandate it will be the responsibility of the United Nations to ensure the safety

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

chapter of British administration will soon end but we²⁷
would be churlish if we did not recognise the splendid
contribution of all those who have served Britain in ^{PP}
fulfilment of the Mandatory obligations. I should like
publicly to thank Sir Alexander Cadogan and our fine team
of officials who have helped us so much in our work at the
United Nations - and I include also the men in our Foreign
and Colonial offices. They have been the butt of unfair
criticism - nevertheless, the department concerned have
performed their tasks and contributed their views, as
always working well together, to Ministers who must carry ^{all}
responsibility for the decisions taken and the policy
pursued. I would ^{wish} like to say that on this there has
always existed a tolerance and mutual appreciation which
has made working as colleagues on a most difficult
problem a great and memorable experience.

Britain has received little gratitude and has been
shamefully traduced for the great part she has played.
We hope the misrepresentation and misunderstandings have
gone for ever. We entertain a great friendship towards
the Arab people and understand their feeling and

/unhappiness

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

At the same time, we have helped the Arabs to realise their
 political hopes in the nations they have recently founded,
 and we enjoy with them a relationship of respect and
 friendliness which, I am certain, will endure.
 We trust our present
 policies in the Arab world we hope can proceed to
 play a larger part in the general pattern of mankind's
 march.
 At the same time
 we hope that a better understanding with the Jewish
 people will evolve as their new responsibilities develop.

We shall lay down our responsibilities in Palestine
 with relief - and yet with regret. All of us had hoped
 to see a more propitious development of Palestine affairs
 when the time came for us to depart, than we dare forecast
 at the present moment. We hope the spirit of
 moderation and tolerance will guide events in the future
 and restore order, peace and harmony in that most famous
 of all lands. If our civilisation owes much to Jewish
 culture, Britain has in turn contributed to the realisation
 by the Jews of some of their dearest hopes. At the
 same time, we have helped the Arabs to realise their
 political hopes in the nations they have recently founded,
 and we enjoy with them a relationship of respect and
 friendliness which, I am certain, will endure.

Palestine and the Arab world we hope can proceed to
 play a larger part in the

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

201

march. Under international inspiration from now on, it is our prayer that the peoples in the Holy Land will cooperate and find that, while retaining their separate independence, they can join together to mutual advantage in making their country prosperous, and happy.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1				2	

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

10-46

FO 371/61797

Return to R.S. a/c

Volume 445
No. 39



Friday
12th Dec., 1947

203

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF COMMONS OFFICIAL REPORT

CONTENTS

CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS BILL:
Read the First time.

PALESTINE:
Debate on Motion for the Adjournment.

FOOD SUPPLIES (CUTS):
Debate on Motion for the Adjournment.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

LONDON
HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
Price Sixpence

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

204

Members who wish to have the Daily Report of the Debates forwarded to them should give notice at the Vote Office. The Bound Volumes will also be sent to Members who similarly express their desire to have them. No proofs of the Daily Reports can be supplied, nor can corrections be made in the Weekly Edition. Corrections which Members suggest for the Bound Volume should be clearly marked in the Daily Report, but not telephoned, and *the copy containing the corrections must be received at the Editor's Room, House of Commons*

**not later than
Wednesday, 17th December, 1947**

STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS ARRANGEMENT GREATLY FACILITATES
THE PROMPT PUBLICATION
OF THE VOLUMES

Members may obtain excerpts of their Speeches from the Official Report (within one month from the date of Publication), on application to the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, c/o the Editor of the Official Report, House of Commons, from whom the terms and conditions of reprinting may be ascertained.

PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

DAILY PARTS—

Single copies : 6d. (by post 7d.).
Annual subscriptions : Commons, £3 10s ; Lords, £2 15s.
Short period subscriptions to cover a fixed number of consecutive daily issues :
40 issues (Lords or Commons), £1
100 " (" " "), £2 10s.

WEEKLY HANSARD—

Single copies : 1s. 6d. (by post 2s.).
Annual subscription : £3.

WEEKLY INDEX (Friday to Thursday)—

Single copies : 3d (by post 4d.).
Annual subscription : 10s.
All subscription rates are inclusive of postage.

The Index to each Volume, which may be used in conjunction with the Daily Parts or Weekly Hansard, is published separately at 1s. and can be supplied to standing order.

Orders should be placed with the Stationery Office at any of the addresses below.

LONDON
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
To be purchased directly from H.M. Stationery Office at the following addresses:
York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 13a Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2;
39-41 King Street, Manchester, 2; 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;
Tower Lane, Bristol, 1; 80 Chichester Street, Belfast
OR THROUGH ANY BOOKSELLER

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, 12th December, 1947

The House met at Eleven o'Clock

PRAYERS

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

COATBRIDGE BURGH EXTENSION, &c.,
ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

Read the Third time, and passed.

BILL PRESENTED

CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS BILL

"To make further provision for securing the exhibition of a certain proportion of British cinematograph films, and otherwise to amend and continue the Cinematograph Films Act, 1938," presented by Mr. Wilson; supported by Mr. Woodburn, the Attorney-General and Mr. Belcher; to be read a Second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 26.]

PALESTINE

Motion made, and Question proposed,
"That this House do now adjourn.—
[Mr. William Whiteley.]

11.6 a.m.

Mr. Sydney Silverman (Nelson and Colne): Yesterday, I listened to not quite all but nearly all of what I cannot help describing as a very dull and dreary Debate. From the speeches on both sides of the House one would have thought that these were the attendances at a rather poverty stricken funeral. I cannot understand the air of despondency, tragedy and misery which seemed to enshroud all the speeches. That the situation in Palestine and the Middle East is almost desperate is true. But what is there new in that? It has been desperate for a long time. The one thing, the first and almost the only thing that the country required was a policy. I do not say for the moment what policy; a

good policy, a bad policy, an indifferent policy, a just or an unjust policy—any kind of policy is better than none, or carrying on as we have been carrying on in Palestine for the past two and a half years.

The first element of relief in the present situation is that, at any rate, a plan has been adopted; a plan has been accepted, and some attempt will be made to carry it out. I should have thought that at any rate that was something about which all of us could rejoice. I do not know whether anyone thinks that there could have been a better plan; I do not know myself; but I do not think that it lies in the mouth of either the Government or of the Opposition to complain of this plan, in the absence of any word of advice or any idea of their own as to what else should have been done. I will return to that point in a moment or two.

Let me come to the second point which seems to me a thing about which to rejoice—and where there is so little about which to rejoice, let us not neglect what there is. Since the end of the war, a situation has developed—and I am not talking now of Palestine but of the world as a whole—which, in one important respect, is far worse than the situation during the war. During the war, even if imposed only by the exigency of the immediate situation and the necessity of victory, at any rate some kind of concerted policy and action by the great, and, indeed, the small Powers of the earth—so far as they were able to make themselves heard—was maintained. Since the end of the war that has broken up. For 2½ years the attempt to set up a society of nations has been abortive. Yet every one has known that unless that society of nations could be set up, and could work, there was no hope for the peace of mankind or the future of the world. In that situation, problem after problem, requiring international consideration and international solution, has been submitted to the United Nations organisation, where no agreement has been reached and no solution has been offered.

Palestine was not the least of such international problems. Indeed, one of the major difficulties in dealing with it was that we could not confine ourselves—and no one complains that the Government did not confine themselves—to the claims of the people on the spot, or those

205

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

206

[Mr. Silverman.]

for whom they were immediately responsible. One of the major difficulties was the widespread international repercussions that might follow upon any policy adopted by any Government in that matter. It bristled with international complications, difficulties, and dangers. Many and serious as have been the international problems which have divided the great and small Powers since the end of the war, I daresay that no one will dispute that this problem of Palestine was as great, as difficult and as dangerous as any. What has happened?

For the first time the United Nations have registered a success. I am not begging the question of what the ultimate result may be; no one knows; but I say that for the first time the United Nations organisation, on which the peace and future of mankind rests, has been able, in a very difficult and dangerous situation, to reach an agreement which was virtually a unanimous agreement. People have said "No, do not regard this as a United Nations' triumph." My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes), who accused my hon. Friend the Member for West Leicester (Mr. Janner) last night of making a speech full of fallacies, but who himself is the prince of paradox, suggested that this was the end—I have not his exact words in front of me—of the United Nations. Why? Because he disagrees with what they did?

How many times have we heard my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich complain of the rule of unanimity in the Security Council? When Russia could not agree with all the other nations and imposed the veto that showed how wicked an enemy of international democracy the U.S.S.R. was. But my hon. Friend reserves the right of veto to himself, to his own, individual, self, and because he does not agree with the solution, says that because the United Nations came to that view they have done something wrong. Presumably, it would have been the salvation of the United Nations if they had failed to agree, and had left the situation as it was when it was presented to them—

Mr. Stokes (Ipswich): Perhaps my hon. Friend will study my speech, and acquaint himself of the fact that what I said was that the United Nations, in arriving at this decision, under American pressure,

and in an unfair manner, had committed political suicide.

Mr. Silverman: I suppose that if a man commits suicide, political or otherwise, he dies? What I said of my hon. Friend's speech was correct. I am coming to the reasons he advanced for that view in a few moments, but first let us agree that he thought that when the United Nations with virtual unanimity, had agreed on a plan, in this difficult and dangerous situation, they had committed political suicide.

Mr. Stokes: That is not what I said.

Mr. Silverman: My hon. Friend said there was a lot of pressure and bargaining. I do not know, but what did he expect would take place when the matter was referred to the United Nations? Did he expect that others in the world would do otherwise than Great Britain did, and try to reconcile conflicting views and forget altogether their own national interests? Would he expect all others to do that while Great Britain reserved the right to put her national interests first? What nonsense. They all looked at their own national interests and their own place in a difficult and dangerous world. Why not? But when all allowance is made for that, what was the result? American pressure? Five of the South American States, who are usually regarded as belonging to the American *bloc*, abstained from voting in this matter in spite of American pressure, if there was any. For the first time, the American *bloc* was broken; five South American States did otherwise than the United States. Is that an example of greater pressure than before, or less?

That is one side; let us come to the other. The Slav *bloc*, which had always maintained a united front on issues of this kind—"ganging up" on the one side or the other, as some of my hon. Friends call it—showed no united front. Yugoslavia, a very important member of that *bloc*, abstained. Of course, there were reasons for abstaining one way and the other way, and reasons for voting against and for. But we do not look for reasons when considering the result. In politics, the most dangerous thing is to reject a good result because the motives of some people who supported that result are disliked: not that I see any grounds for

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

208

[Mr. Silverman.]
there anybody who regarded it as workable? Nobody in the Foreign Office or in the Colonial Office regarded it as workable. The principal advisers to the right hon. Gentleman did not think it was workable. It had no friends or supporters anywhere. It was a totally unworkable, unrealistic thing. There had been, at one time, another unanimous recommendation, other than partition. My hon. Friend the Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) was a member of the Commission and so was the hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller). They indeed reached a unanimous series of recommendations, within a unitary Palestine, a little while ago. It was unanimous, but it was rejected by His Majesty's Government.

Mr. Creech Jones: It was rejected by the Jews.

Mr. Silverman: I do not know. My right hon. Friend interrupts me to say that the Report was rejected by the Jews. I am not considering now the attitude of either party to the dispute, but I do not think it is quite true that it was rejected by the Jews; but be it so, for the purposes of the argument. I am not concerned with that. I am saying that it was rejected by His Majesty's Government, and rejected by the Prime Minister in this House almost before the ink was dry on the paper, and before anybody could have any chance to say whether they would accept it or reject it. My information is that the Arabs would have accepted it, if it had been firmly presented.

Mr. Stokes: No.

Mr. Silverman: My hon. Friend again says "No." Very well, then. Which ever way we have it, it was the only alternative solution ever offered by anybody impartial, looking at the matter judicially, after having examined the evidence culled from the two nations and from many quarters. It was a unanimous recommendation of a solution for a unitary State. It was rejected, let us say, by everybody, by my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich for the Arabs and by my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Government. I take the word of my right hon. Friend that the Jews rejected it. So everybody rejected it,

and that solution was not open. Apart from that, what other decision could the United Nations have reached? If there is one, if the Government knew of one or the Opposition knew of one, or if anybody knew of one, was it not their plain duty to put it forward to the United Nations and to let the United Nations consider the suggestion on its merits? Nobody ventured to do it. Nobody had sufficient confidence in any other solution.

The present solution has held the field since 1937 when it was first recommended by a British commission of inquiry under Lord Peel. My hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. T. Reid), who spoke yesterday, said he did not like this solution. He did not like it in 1937. He was a member of the so-called fact-finding commission, which went out to Palestine after the Peel Commission had recommended partition, to see whether it could find workable boundaries. He has come here, and I have heard him boast since: "I killed partition." His view yesterday was therefore hardly an impartial one.

Mr. Stokes: I do not suppose the hon. Member's is either.

Mr. Silverman: I am doing my best. I would rather have a good solution of this problem than a bad solution. I am prepared to consider any solution. I certainly do not like partition. I was against it in 1937, and I am against it now, in principle. People talk as though partition was a Jewish solution. It is nothing of the kind. Partition is a compromise solution, a very severe compromise for the Jewish State to make; but that is not my point. Suppose there is nobody impartial in the matter. Suppose everybody rejects the solution for prejudiced and partial reasons. Be it so.

What else was the United Nations to do? What other plan was before them? What other solution could they have reached? Let it be said further that not merely was this solution proposed in 1937, but there was a period—was it in July of last year?—before ever this matter was referred to the United Nations at all, when it was being canvassed in this House and in the newspapers. Everybody decided that though it was not a good solution and there were obvious injustices

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

and even more obvious dangers involved in it, nevertheless partition offered the only practicable hope of any solution at all. Every newspaper in this country said so—"The Times," the "Telegraph," the "Manchester Guardian" and the "News Chronicle." I cannot recite them all, but I cannot think of any newspaper that did not commit itself before this went to the United Nations; that is, committed itself to the view that partition offered the only hope of a way out. What we are looking for is not for ways out, but hopes for a way out—something on which to base a policy with a hope of it meeting with some kind of success.

Earl Winterton (Horsham): May I draw the hon. Member's attention to an historical fact? There has been no hope of any way out without bloodshed since the Government of the day in their infinite unwisdom, committed themselves to the Balfour Declaration on the one hand, and on the other hand gave orders to some of us in that country to make promises to the Arabs which were in conflict with that decision.

Mr. Silverman: What would the noble Lord do about it now?

Earl Winterton: It is not my business.

Mr. Silverman: It is our business. How can it be said now that this ought never to have happened?

Earl Winterton: I say that these conflicting declarations should not have been made, and that every Government has been cursed with that ever since.

Mr. Silverman: The noble Lord need not burst any blood vessels to convince me that anyone who makes conflicting promises and is then called upon to fulfil them will find himself in trouble. Certainly a large part of the trouble arises out of the conflicting promises which were made, or at least the conflicting interpretations which have been placed upon them. But how does it help to go on repeating that? The thing has happened, and we are in this position as the result. What we are considering is how to get out of it. It is no good repeating that the Balfour Declaration or the McMahon letters were wrong. That does not help us now. For 30 years people have been coming in and out of Palestine on the basis and on the strength of these conflicting promises. The question is how

we can now meet that situation, not with complete justice to both sides, because that cannot be done. The question is how we can, somehow or other, work out a plan which will offer the greatest common measure of justice to both sides. Everyone who has looked at that question from 1937 onwards has come to the conclusion that the only thing that can be done, since Palestine cannot be given to the Arabs, and since it cannot be given to the Jews, is to divide it between them. There is really no other way out, and everyone knows it.

Earl Winterton: No.

Mr. Silverman: There it is, "No" again. With every proposal we hear the word "No". With every suggestion it is "No", and when the question is asked, "will you advance some alternative solution of your own", again we hear "No". There cannot be a solution by one side having its way. Let me say this to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley), with whose speech I found myself largely in agreement. I am bound to say that he was a little ungracious when he taunted the Government with all the troubles they had caused by their handling of the Palestine situation during the past two and a half years. I have repeatedly said that myself in this House, but it is not for the right hon. Gentleman to say it.

What troubles did the Government get into in Palestine? They got into trouble in Palestine because of their mistaken belief that they were bound to go on carrying out the policy imposed by Mr. Chamberlain's Government in 1938. It is not for the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Government were wrong. He talked about not imposing a solution by force which is not agreed upon by both parties. That is a tautology in itself. If a thing is agreed by both sides, why is there need to impose it by force? In 1938, the solution was imposed by force. The White Paper solution was imposed by force, and this party said that they would not be bound by it. The solution was wrong, and the Mandates Commission said that it was not in accordance with the Mandate; everyone gave notice that they would resist it.

The trouble this Government has been in has been due to their endeavour to continue to apply, in the absence of an

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

74 Δ 8

All the Middle East is desert. It is said that the Arab is the son of the desert. That is not so. The Arab is the father of the desert. In ancient times and in medieval times all this land was rich and fertile. It was as fertile on the Southern side of the Mediterranean as the similar land in similar climatic conditions on the Northern side of the Mediterranean. And so it can be again. So it will be again. I agree with one thing said by my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich, that what

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

the Arabs dislike is not Jews coming in, but Europeans coming in. They fear that, somehow or other, this is the spearhead of a new European colonising invasion of Arab lands. They need not fear. The Jews will not repeat all the social and economic mistakes of Europe in the Middle East. They will not exploit anybody. They converted the desert of Palestine into garden land by the labour of their own hands, by their own efforts—young students, doctors, lawyers, engineers, rabbis, going out into malaria-infested districts and converting them, at the cost of their lives into places that grew produce and flowers, grapes, oranges, grapefruit, and all the other things that make the country now a garden spot of the Middle East.

And what has been done in Palestine can be done by the Arabs themselves under proper leadership—their own leadership—all over the Middle East. It cannot be done by the feudal landlords whom my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich prefers alone in the Middle East out of all the world. Nowhere else would he defend the landlordism that he defends in Palestine. No, there is a social revolution there and, out of it is coming wealth, out of it is being won back into civilisation the 20 centuries-old desert, and what has been done in Palestine is only an example of what can be done all over the Middle East. We are beginning here, not a retreat, but a great advance to a new era of human civilisation and, for my part, I am proud and happy that my own race will take a leading part in that great collective adventure.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Thomas Moore (Ayr Burghs): The House is, of course, aware of the deep interest and concern which the hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) takes in this matter, but I failed to follow some of his arguments. He did not agree with partition and yet he argued for partition, he did not like partition and yet the whole point of his speech was in favour of partition—

Mr. S. Silverman: I prefer it to anarchy.

Sir T. Moore: Well, that may be an alternative solution, but I want to make a few suggestions which will show that there is at any rate one other alternative solution. However, I will not follow the

hon. Member in the various points he made. In considering this vexing and troublesome and, indeed, tragic problem of Palestine, my mind is inevitably driven back to almost similar conditions which existed in Ireland some quarter of a century ago. An almost similar situation to that which the Government of today have to face had to be faced by the Government of 25 years ago. The size of the territory concerned is not dissimilar, the number of British troops involved is somewhat similar, and I hope to show that other conditions also are alike.

I should explain that I am using this as an example because I believe it may lead us to the alternative solution which I would like the House to consider, if it is not too late. I was sent to Dublin as a staff officer when the rebellion broke out in 1916, and I saw that tragic tale unfolded. I then was sent back in 1920, when the "troubles" became more acute, and so I had some little experience. During that second period, two incidents occurred which I think have a bearing on our present difficulties. At a conference held in Dublin in 1921 it was decided that the rebel force could not be subdued unless some far greater military operation was undertaken, and that operation was not considered advisable by Mr. Lloyd George or the British Government of that day, who were unwilling to undertake the further obligations involved. The second incident was a confession made to me by the rebel leader, Michael Collins, sometime afterwards. He said that when the Treaty negotiations—almost exactly the position we are in today—were undertaken, the rebels were reduced to an insignificant number of rifles and revolvers and still less ammunition.

Why, therefore, it might be asked should this vast British Army—supported by a powerful British Government, exalted with recent victory, with easy bases in England from which to draw supplies and support—give way, and why should they be unable to crush this insignificant rebel force, ill-armed, hopelessly out-numbered, hopelessly equipped and with no reserves on which to draw? The answer is simple: it was because the rebel movement was backed by the vast majority of Southern Irish people. Every hotel, every pub, every club had its underground movement, as we call it now, where true information was given to the

211

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

solution, and does not lead to a prosperous community, or a prosperous economy. So, in my last word, I ask the Colonial Secretary to take a fresh view of this decision reached by the United Nations. I am not going into the reasons why it was reached, and what pressure was brought on various states to take the decision, or to reverse their previous decision, but I hope he will find some method on the lines I have indicated of bringing peace to this torn and tortured land.

11.57 a.m.

Mr. M. Philips Price (Forest of Dean): I am sorry my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson & Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) is not in his place, because I have a few bones to pick with him. He devoted a great part of his speech with great forensic eloquence, of which he is a master, to what I may term very special pleading. He twitted us first with having no alternative to this plan. "What can you suggest? There is no other plan," he seemed to say. I agree with the hon. and gallant Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir T. Moore) that there is an alternative along the lines of what is sometimes called the Morrison plan, the federal plan. That may be difficult to carry out in the heated atmosphere prevailing at the moment, but let us keep that plan in our minds. I believe that there is an alternative, and that is my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne. He said we cannot get a solution by one side having its own way. Indeed, I agree, and that is just why I disagree with this partition proposal, for it is one side having its own way.

Mr. Mikardo (Reading): Which side?

Mr. Price: The Zionists' side is getting all its wants. It has not got all Trans-jordan and Syria——

Mr. Janner (Leicester, West): Will my hon. Friend be good enough, in making that statement to explain why he suggests that the Zionists or the Jews in Palestine have it all their own way, when they have conceded the question of Transjordan—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."]—Oh, yes, that was intended by the Mandate—and half of Palestine, which is three-quarters, or more, than the amount intended?

74 A 11

Mr. Price: I presume they have realised the full effect of *reculer pour mieux sortir*, withdrawing to spring again.

Mr. Turner-Samuels (Gloucester): Would the hon. Gentleman say if it is his solution that the Jews should get nothing at all?

Mr. Price: I would be obliged to the hon. and learned Member for Gloucester (Mr. Turner-Samuels) if he would allow me to make my own speech. My hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne is fearful that, in the process of our withdrawal from Palestine, we may not maintain law and order in the way in which he thinks we should. I know we have a very difficult task in withdrawing our troops from Palestine, but I maintain that we ought to do it with the utmost fairness to both sides. My hon. Friend talks about us having a force ready to prevent an Arab invasion coming in from outside. I agree, but I think we ought also to have a force ready to prevent Jewish invasion by illegal immigration from outside, too. Does he agree to that? [AN HON. MEMBER: "We have."] I am not so sure. I hope the Zionists will not, in the interim period, try to force the issue by illegal immigration, but that it will stop from now onwards until our troops are withdrawn.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend thought fit to make a disgraceful and ignorant aspersion on the Arab world by describing them as the "fathers of the desert." I will not waste the time of the House in refuting an argument of that kind. My hon. Friend became a little more definite later on, when he cast that aspersion on the Arab world as being feudal landlord-ridden. There, again, he shows grave ignorance. I was in Palestine two years ago, and I saw the Zionist colonies, and I also did what most people of his point of view do not do. I went to the Arab villages and looked to find that feudal landlordism to which he referred. The facts are that all along the coast of Palestine, Syria and the Lebanon, there are no large landlords. There are small landlords owning a tract of land, part of which they let and part of which they work themselves. I went to an Arab farm in the Jordan Valley, half of which was worked and half of which was let out. The big feudal landlords are not here, but far away, and no doubt in time there will be reforms there. Here, the country is behind the Western world, but there

Mr. Price: I have no doubt that the British delegation at Lake Success said, in private, many things that were unexceptionable, but my point is whether that will be understood in the bazaars of Cairo and Baghdad, the oases of Saudi Arabia and the hill villages of the Lebanon. I have seen and have felt the Arab reactions to our policy over recent months. In general, I can tell the House that our refusal to

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1		2		3		4		5		6	
		1						2			

Reference:

FO 371 / 61797

215

stay in Palestine, and to implement a decision which is not acceptable to either party, has enormously raised our prestige in the Middle East as a whole, and in the Arab world in particular. There are, of course, a few hotheads among the Arabs who, having first denounced British Imperialism, then want to use it to carry out an Arab solution; but the bulk of the Arab world, on this issue, is calm, level-headed, and terribly in earnest.

Another thing which I rather regret is that we do not seem to have given a lead to the Commonwealth and Empire. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Nelson and Colne, although for altogether different reasons, that it is not an edifying spectacle to see the overseas Dominions voting in one lobby, the Moslem Dominions in another, and ourselves remaining neutral. That is a most disastrous preliminary to the careers of the two Indian Dominions, which we hope will always stay with us. I think we might have done something by way of giving a lead to the Commonwealth and Empire in this matter.

Mr. Mikardo: We did.

Mr. Price: I do not know what was done behind the scenes—

Mr. Mikardo: Plenty was done behind the scenes.

Mr. Price: I will have plenty to say on that in a few minutes, but not, perhaps, to the edification of the hon. Gentleman. Whatever it was, I think we should have given a lead, and should have avoided this situation which will have very bad effects throughout certain parts of the Empire and the Commonwealth of Nations. I feel that the whole story of what happened at Lake Success is so dreadful that it is about time there was some plain speaking. My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) did some plain speaking yesterday, and I might do a little more. If Russia had wanted an example of irresponsibility in international affairs, and had wanted to pillory it as American imperialism, she could not have found a better opportunity than that. Of course, Russia will now be silent on this issue for, like the Greek soldiers at the siege of Troy, she is inside the wooden horse, which is being dragged inside the citadel of the Middle East. Here we have an example of an

irresponsible Congress angling for the Jewish vote next year, of Zionist wire-pullers with millions behind them in New York, and, last but not least, the U.S.S.R. hoping to realise the dream of the Czars of establishing naval bases in the Mediterranean. What an unholy trinity it is, and what unholy methods this unholy trinity uses.

I am informed that the Philippines' delegate was instructed to vote with the Arabs, but was spoken to by a high authority in the course of a direct telephone call to Manila—I do not know who it was; at least I must not say who it was—and, within a few hours, the decision was reversed. The Republic of China also wanted to vote with the Arabs. It was hinted to her that the prospects of her loan might be endangered if she did not vote in the other lobby. Within a very short time, the vote of China went the other way. The wiser heads of the United States administration who know the facts, are against this partition, but Congress intervened and stamped the United States executive into this position. By its action, it has endangered the whole future and stability of U.N.O., for U.N.O. was not allowed to make a decision in cool and calm judgment. I am afraid that the States in Southern Asia and in the Middle East, who have seen what is going on, will regard these developments with contempt.

During my visit to the Arab lands, I had, more than once, to argue, sometimes violently, with the Arabs to make use of U.N.O. They said that U.N.O. was no use, that we should not bother with it, and that it was only a backstairs way of getting views expressed and decisions made in favour of great Powers. What will be my position now if I meet those people again?

Mr. Benn Levy (Eton and Slough): The hon. Gentleman has made some very grave and loose charges against China and the Philippines. Would he not, at least, think it suitable to let the House know on what substantial evidence he bases those irresponsible charges?

Mr. Price: I am not bound to state to this House the source of my information.

Mr. Levy: They are just rumours.

Mr. Price: No, Sir, the information comes from very good sources. That is

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

74 A 14

Meanwhile, at all costs we must extract our forces and stores and ensure that the evacuation is carried out safely, and that we keep law and order in those regions where we actually are. It is essential that we do nothing during our evacuation to favour in any way this disgraceful partition. It is, in any case, unworkable and any period of chaos which may supervene—which I hope will not, and that the Arabs will keep their heads—will show the unworkability of this plan. Then, perhaps, an opportunity may come to put

Copyright of the Public Record Office, London

1	2	3	4	5	6
1				2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

217

forward a sensible alternative. It will be the time then for the federal scheme, because men's hearts will not stay forever at white heat. Zionist imperialism will meet its Waterloo, and then, on its ruins, reason can reign supreme.

12.24 p.m.

Sir Waldron Smithers (Orpington): May I say how much I appreciated and admired the speech of the hon. Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. Philips Price). It was a typical House of Commons speech. He spoke from his heart and with sincerity. The hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) said that the position in Palestine had been desperate for a long time. It has been getting increasingly desperate for 2,000 years and I want to put forward something which I hope will mitigate what I think will be a terrible catastrophe in Palestine.

I am glad to see the Foreign Secretary in his place, because, if he has the time to listen to my few remarks, I think he can help to carry out the policy I am trying to indicate, which is this. Even if Palestine is to be partitioned, and that seems inevitable, I do make a plea for an international enclave for Jerusalem and surrounding districts. I know that the responsibility now does not rest entirely with His Majesty's Government. It is a matter for U.N.O. But we are still members of U.N.O. and I would ask that the strongest efforts should be made to try and implement the policy which I am venturing to outline. The Oxford Dictionary defines "enclave" as "a piece of territory entirely shut in by foreign Dominions."

It is about the enclave round Jerusalem that I want to speak. If the Colonial Secretary and the Foreign Secretary would be good enough to look up the letter of the Archbishop of York in "The Times" of Saturday, 6th December, on the subject of the enclave of greater Jerusalem, I think they would find summarised what I am about to say.

I wish to make three short quotations to bring into perspective what I want to put before the House. These quotations relate to the boundaries or the proposed boundaries of the enclave. The first is by the Palestine Royal Commission of 1937. They said:

"An enclave should be demarcated extending from a point north of Jerusalem to a

point south of Bethlehem, and access to the sea should be provided by a corridor extending to the north of the main road and to the south of the railway, including the towns of Lydda and Ramle and terminating at Jaffa."

That is at page 381 of the Report.

The second quotation is from the partition Commission of 1938 who

"(1) moved the northern boundary to the north of Ramallah to include landing ground for aircraft at Qalandiya and the road from Ramallah to Latrun regarded as an essential military line of communication for the defence of the Enclave."

and

"(2) Widened the corridor between Jerusalem and Jaffa, and more particularly between Jaffa and the Jewish State because the Commission felt that with the over-riding necessity of keeping Jerusalem and Bethlehem inviolate and of ensuring free and safe access to them for all the world—"

and these words are very important—

"the necessity of protecting the Holy Places must over-ride the needs of the Jewish State, and if the Mandatory were to be entrusted with the protection of the Holy Places it was essential that the Enclave should have boundaries capable of being defended."

The third short quotation comes from the majority plan of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine accepted by the United Nations Assembly:

"The city of Jerusalem shall include within its borders the present municipality of Jerusalem, plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which is Abu Dis, the most southern Bethlehem, the most western Ain Karim, the most northern Shu'fat."

That is the geographical outline I wish to give.

Now we come to the administration. The Royal Commission of 1937 said this:

"The Royal Commission regards the Mandate of a Jerusalem enclave as a sacred trust of civilisation—"

That is why I am pleading that if Palestine is to be partitioned, there should be this international enclave of the Holy Places. The Report of the Commission goes on to say:

"—a trust on behalf not merely of the peoples of Palestine but of multitudes of other lands to whom Jerusalem and Bethlehem, one or both, are Holy Places, and all the inhabitants of the enclave should stand on an equal footing."

It then says:

"The U.N.O. majority plan envisages the administration of the City of Jerusalem as placed under the international trusteeship system by means of a trusteeship agreement designating the United Nations as the administrative authority. The Governor of Jerusalem—"

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

218

1361

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1362

[Sir W. Smithers.]

this, again, is a very important point—
 “is to be appointed by the trusteeship council of the United Nations. He will be neither Arab nor Jew, nor a citizen of the Palestine State, nor at the time of his appointment a resident in Jerusalem. The protection of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in the City of Jerusalem is to be entrusted to a special police force, the members of which shall be recruited outside Palestine and shall be neither Jew nor Arab.”

There now comes a big “but” to which I would respectfully draw the attention of the Foreign Secretary. There has been a plea for the inclusion of the Jewish part of Jerusalem in the Jewish State. This plea was brought to the attention of the Partition Commission and dealt with by them fully in Chapter 9 of their Report. They made it clear that political and religious objections to such a plan were even more insuperable than the actual administrative difficulties. According to the letter written by the Archbishop of Canterbury, to which I have referred, this plea has now been revived, and representatives of the Jewish Agency are claiming that only the ancient City of Jerusalem should be under international control. As the Archbishop points out in his letter, not only would this mean that a large number of long-established Christian churches, schools, hospitals and institutions would be within the Jewish State, but for the sake of the “peace of Jerusalem” and the security of the Holy Places, it is vital that the Holy City and its immediate neighbourhood should be under international control.

There is a further important point which applies to all the monotheistic religions. It is not only Christian opinion which is to be considered in this matter. As was pointed out in Chapter 9 of the Palestine Partition Commission Report, Jerusalem is sacred to Moslems as well as Jews and Christians. The whole idea of limiting the territory under international control to the old city is fantastic. It would be impossible to administer the trust under such conditions. There seems to be a danger that the need to emphasise the sacred nature of the Jerusalem enclave, as apart from a mere neutral territory or a museum piece, may be lost sight of. It is not only a matter of guardianship of the specified places in the Royal Commission's Report, but the establishment of a permanent Holy Place for the adherents of the three great mono-

theistic faiths throughout the world, because Jerusalem as a Holy City is as important to religious-minded Jews as to religious-minded Moslems and Christians, and the increasing commercialisation of the Holy City strikes at the heart of our hope to form a Jerusalem from which the word of God may go forth yet again to an exhausted and dying world.

One of the methods I would suggest of implementing what I have tried to explain, is this. One great deterrent to crime in the Holy City might be if it was known that the punishment for any deliberate act of violence would be banishment for life from the Holy City, as the person who committed that deliberate act of violence would be unworthy to live within its precincts. Here is a chance to provide some centre for healing and possibly reconstruction and revival of religious thought, not only in the Holy Land itself but throughout the world.

I wish to refer to the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller) who, I am sorry, is not in his place, because his speech was one of those which went to the heart of this trouble and impending catastrophe in Palestine. He referred to the events of 2,000 years ago and expressed the hope that we should hear for ever over the wireless the bells of Bethlehem at Christmas. I want to pay a personal tribute to the hon. and learned Member because I think his remarks were influenced by his dear old father who was a respected and loved Member of this House. “The Times” in its leader this morning refers to the danger of turning the Holy City into a cockpit. I believe it will be a cockpit, because these days have been foretold.

There are chaotic and anarchic conditions all over the world, and it is possible that the battle between good and evil will be fought out in the cockpit of Jerusalem. It will be holy war. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke), whose speech was a major contribution to this Debate, said that the question was much bigger than Palestine, and that the seeds of the next world war of power politics were being sown. The conditions in Palestine in the coming months may easily and, I think, will provide a harvest for the atheistic and materialistic

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Soviet Communist propaganda which is threatening to engulf the world.

I would make one final appeal to the Foreign Secretary and the Colonial Secretary: Do let us try to keep Jerusalem and the surrounding country with a corridor to Jaffa and the sea. Let us try and keep those places free from desecration. History is repeating itself.

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitudes, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

It looks to me as if that saying is about to be fulfilled.

12.39 p.m.

Major Vernon (Dulwich): For the first time since I have been in this House I have found some measure of agreement with what the hon. Member for Orpington (Sir W. Smithers) has said. I think his last phrase was most peculiarly apt, that in the rapid retreat from Palestine which has been advocated by hon. Members yesterday and today, there is a parallel with the Biblical reference of washing our hands and keeping ourselves free and clear of this trouble. The other feature of his speech with which I agree was that he was putting international loyalty superior to local and national loyalty and even superior to religious loyalty, and in that I agree with him.

Sir W. Smithers: I do not want to be misunderstood. I do not want to put international loyalty against national loyalty. As things are at present we cannot help ourselves. What I was appealing for was international control over the Jerusalem enclave.

Major Vernon: I am sorry the hon. Member did not agree with me when I was trying to agree with him, but we will leave the matter there.

It was rather the procedure mentioned by the hon. and gallant Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir T. Moore) which encouraged me to intervene. He said it was a very well known military fact that armies are often beaten when they fight peoples. Armies are designed to fight similarly armed other armies. There are many examples in history—the Irish was one—where the tank and the artillery were no match for a united people, and that has

been our trouble in Palestine. There have been shops set alight, disturbances and troubles here and there, and tanks have rumbled into the streets and the whole military machine has been set in motion. It was just fantastic; they could not get at the seat of the trouble because they were not the right apparatus to deal with that kind of disturbance. That is one of the simple facts of the case.

The hon. Member for Ayr Burghs and many other Members have advocated a very rapid retreat from Palestine. The Colonial Secretary said it was the intention of the Government to get out of Palestine as quickly as possible and that is a military decision. If you have to shift so many hundred men, so many tons of stores, and you have certain roads, vehicles and ships available, the whole process is one of arithmetic and it is an arithmetical problem which is connected with this operation. I understood from what the Colonial Secretary said that that was the problem. It is not a political problem of getting out as quickly as we can because no one can see the political future very far ahead, and for Members to urge us to get out quicker than is possible is to assume things. You must expect to have things like roads being blocked and your timetable out of order in these areas, and I do not understand what is in Members' minds in trying to speed up this operation.

In these difficulties which face us—and I would be the last to belittle them—there are two methods of approach. One is to steer the way through intermediate obstacles. Another method is to look far ahead and pick out something to steer for, find an intermediate point and approach from that way. What is our ultimate objective? Reading the speeches of Parliamentary spokesmen all over the world, we find them saying that world government is the end they have in mind; they even say that from the backward area of the United States Senate. The Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have all said that our object is world government. How are we going to achieve it? We must always keep our ultimate object in mind as we try to solve the intermediate problem. The United Nations is the intermediate step.

Are these measures we are discussing today likely to strengthen the United

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

220-1365

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1366

[Major Vernon.]

Nations or weaken it? Our ultimate object must be to strengthen the United Nations, as of supreme importance, and to accept decisions loyally and carry them out is a reasonable thing to do. How are we going to do our share in carrying out the decisions of the United Nations? We certainly have responsibility for doing our share. Was it not Britain who took a leading part in establishing the League of Nations? Was it not among the British populace that the League of Nations Union was founded, and has not that Union been the largest voluntary society we have ever had? All through the period between the two wars there was tremendous loyalty to the League of Nations among the ordinary people of Britain, and in these days loyalty to the United Nations among the ordinary folk is stronger than it is among Governments. Governments have a vested interest in national sovereignty, and it is the people who are looking beyond national sovereignty. We are told by some people that the Foreign Office are somewhat cynical about the United Nations. It may be so—I do not have the inside information that so many of our friends seem to have—but, judging by the result, one detects less enthusiasm among the people in authoritative positions than among the general populace.

Coming nearer home, it may be that Governments will not support the United Nations sufficiently to establish it. If that is so, what is going to be done about it? There is a move springing up spontaneously in many parts of the world to by-pass the United Nations altogether and go at one step to world government. It is a move which will grow if the Governments disappoint us in the support they are giving to the United Nations. Coming again to our immediate problems. There is a danger of disorder in Palestine. How is it going to be put down? Will it be checked by some tanks and some heavy weapons or will it be checked by a force appropriate to the job? What force would be appropriate to the job? Clearly, one beyond suspicion and the one which is not partisan.

There has been a tendency to pour scorn on the small nations comprising a commission in Palestine, but I think that is wrong. If they have an im-

partial approach they stand a chance of getting the trust of the people, and it is that impartiality in the force which is needed to implement partition; that is our only hope. Members have said that we should not send our troops into Palestine and into danger. Troops have always been sent into danger. That was so in the old imperialistic days when expeditions were sent on projects we did not like at all, but we did not grumble a great deal. I am not proposing that our troops should be sent to Palestine, but I do say that here is a magnificent job of work and it is one of the most heroic enterprises we could have had—to go into the disturbed country with no ulterior object but to restore order.

I am certain that there are plenty of fellows in the world who would volunteer for that difficult job because they think it is a right and honourable thing to do. There would be no difficulty in getting recruits for a real United Nations force to check disturbances in that part of the country. When it comes to the defence of frontiers, as Members have said, it might be that a United Nations contingent could deal with that. It is possible that they could have contingents attached from regular armies and they could each take a section of the frontier to prevent armies and warlike expeditions crossing in either direction. Clearly, however, that is an international job and not a national one, and I hope the Foreign Secretary will give us some support and encouragement for this idea, that we shall see this plan for a United Nations force encouraged and that Britain will play her part in support of that line of action.

12.49 p.m.

Mr. Dodds-Parker (Banbury): I am sure the House will agree in general with the hon. and gallant Member for Dulwich (Major Vernon) in his suggestion that some sort of federal authority would have satisfied many in this House—possibly a majority—rather than the present position where we see Palestine cut in half, and I am very glad he has taken this opportunity once more to mention the project of world government. How far ahead in the future it may be we do not know, but many people see it as the ultimate solution to many of our problems. I am not sure whether I agree with the statement that an international force would have an appeal to the right

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

sort of idealists to go into the disturbed area in order to restore peace. I am afraid that in a force of that sort the roughneck who might go in might increase, rather than decrease, the difficulties of the disturbed area. I should like to feel that the hon. Member is right, and that it would attract idealists to go there to hold the pass during the critical period ahead.

I want as strongly as I can to support the plea made yesterday by the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes), that His Majesty's Government should use their influence with the Arab States to localise this problem. No other hon. Member has stressed the importance of this as clearly as did the hon. Member for Ipswich. It is most important that the trouble in Palestine should not spread to the neighbouring Arab States. All of us who, like myself, have been sympathetic with the Arabs have found among them a genuine fear of what might happen if a Jewish State were set up in Palestine. There has also been a fear that reprisals might be taken against the unfortunate Jews in those countries, many of whom were born there and have lived there all their lives, whose ancestors settled there centuries ago. It would be a great disaster if the Arab States sought to take it out of those Jews. I support the plea of the hon. Member for Ipswich that we should do all in our power to appeal to the Arab States not to take it out of those Jews who have been there so long.

Equally we must appeal to the Zionists to restrain those hotheads among them who are appealing to forces inside and outside Palestine not to regard this present settlement as permanent. On page 8 of the "Manchester Guardian" today there is a statement by the Hebrew Legion that this settlement should not be regarded as final, and they state that they aim at the whole of Palestine and not just the awkward, truncated part allotted to them under partition. If such ambitions are to be stirred up on the one side, I must take the opportunity of warning those Zionists that there will be reprisals and that reprisals can be taken against those unfortunate Jews, as the hon. Member for Ipswich pointed out, who are amongst the Arabs in such numbers and have nothing to do with the present quarrel.

Mr. Mikardo: I am sure everyone would wish to associate himself with the appeal

that the hon. Gentleman is making to the Arab countries with regard to their behaviour to the Jews within their boundaries, but I think we should not blind our eyes to the fact—and I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree—that the only anti-Jewish pogrom which has so far taken place in an Arab country has taken place in a British Colony.

Mr. Dodds-Parker: I quite agree, and it is most unfortunate that that should have taken place; but I am warning the Zionists that there is a very genuine fear, which has existed for a long time, that the Zionist claim is not to be limited to Palestine—that they may prepare a movement on the lines of the *Volkdeutsche* movement when Hitler came to power, and which stirred up German minorities living in countries across the world from Patagonia to the Volga. There is a fear there might be a movement which would suggest that because, say, there are 100,000 Jews in Baghdad, the Jews had a claim on that city and to other regions outside the present boundaries of Palestine. We heard an hon. Member say yesterday that Transjordan is part of Palestine, and so the claim has already gone forth for land outside the boundaries of Palestine as they are today. I ask the Foreign Secretary to bring all his influence to bear with the Arab States, who can be such good friends to this country, and have been hitherto, to see that they do all that is possible to limit this trouble to the boundaries of Palestine.

I do not feel that there is very much use at this moment in going over the Balfour Declaration and the history of the time since it was made. What we have to do now is to try to make the best of the situation that will face us in the future, particularly the situation during the next few months. I am one of those who believe that now the decision has been taken that we are to get out of Palestine, we should get out as soon as we possibly can. I am certain that the military authorities will do their very best to implement the decision. Having had a certain amount to do with them, I think they tend to go rather too slow than too fast. However, we know that there is a large amount of stores in Palestine, and that it will take some time to shift them. If we can move out faster, especially from the disturbed areas, so much the better. The Foreign Secretary was good enough to make clear last night that 15th

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Some people claim that the Jews are a race. I have already referred to a number of Jews who have intermarried, and I am quite sure that there is no people which has intermarried more. They have a larger percentage of intermarriage than

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

any other peoples, because they have been scattered all over the world and married wherever they have lived or passed. If we cannot regard the Jews as a religious or a racial group, can we treat them as a national group? That is a little difficult when one remembers that there are British Jews, Russian Jews, German Jews, and Jews in every country of the world. It is very difficult to conceive that these various national groups could meet together in one small country—Palestine.

On the political aspect of the Jewish people, we have been told that Jews, as one group, have exerted a great deal of pressure on the decision of the United Nations. In this country we have had Jews in the Labour Party, in the Liberal Party, and, I believe, there was one Jew who attained the leadership of the Tory Party. They have never been confined to one political group in this country, and it is sheer nonsense to talk about the Jews in America forming one group which has applied political pressure, when, as we know, there are Jews in every section of American life. They are in the trade union movement, in the Labour movement, in the Democratic Party, in the Republican Party; they are Communists and they are capitalists; they are scattered throughout the whole of the American people in one way or another, as they are scattered and divided throughout the different sections of the British people. Therefore, it is impossible to regard Jews anywhere as being of one nature.

Historically, this question might have been solved no later than 1920, from which period I think the rise of some sort of consciousness of Arab nationalism dates. At that time the question might have been settled without very much strife, and certainly without all the trouble that has happened since. Whatever decision the United Nations had come to on this matter, there would have been trouble; there is no question about that. All the solutions which have been put forward would have led to trouble of one kind or another. Therefore, up to now the attitude of the Foreign Secretary has been a perfectly correct one. The hon. Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. Philips Price) gave us a great deal of secret history for which he could not, or would not, produce any kind of verification, so I think we can dismiss that as of no

account. If, and when, his evidence does arrive we can consider it, but until that time we cannot. I, for one, refuse to consider it—

Mr. Philips Price rose—

Dr. Jeger: And I refuse to give way.

Hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Price: Surely, the hon. Member will permit me a short reply? Would he read the reports of the discussions which are to be found in the Library of this House? He will get all he wants there.

Dr. Jeger: If the hon. Member has the evidence it is a great pity he did not produce it before, when he was categorically challenged on the Floor of the House a few minutes ago, and when he refused to state the source of his information.

Mr. Price: Not the source.

Mr. Mikardo: He suggested it might be out of Order.

Dr. Jeger: If he suggests that to refer to documents in the Library of this House is out of Order, I think he is wrong.

Mr. Price: It was a certain person, or two persons, to whom I said I could not refer in this House. The other material is in the Library.

Dr. Jeger: The hon. Member could have referred to the documents, but he just did not want to; he declined to do so, preferring to make a sort of super-mystery of the whole thing.

The hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke)—whom I am sorry to say is not here—spoke of the great natural wealth of Palestine, saying that there were all sorts of things under the surface. He talked about gold under the Dead Sea, but he did not mention uranium, although I am pretty sure there is uranium in Palestine. The hon. and gallant Member seemed to regard the attitude of everybody, Jews included, towards Palestine as being another great hush-hush mystery. He seemed to suggest that there was a great conspiracy to keep everything in the dark. The only thing lacking in his great mystery story was the old exploded Protocol of the Elders of Zion, which to my great surprise has not yet been introduced in this Debate.

223.

1
2
3
4
5
6

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: FO 371/61797

224

1373

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

-1374

[Dr. Jeger.]

We have had a series of outrageous attacks upon the decision of the United Nations. When we go to law and put a case before a legal court, we have to accept the decision of the court whether it be in our favour or against us, and it is hardly in accord with the tradition of British Conservative policy to counter a decision which, for the moment, happens to be against us. We ought to accept the decisions which are made, because we are part of the United Nations organisation; we subscribe to it, and we helped to create it; we helped to create the Charter, and we ought to accept any decision at which that organisation arrives, especially when we have submitted the question to them for their decision.

Mr. Manningham-Buller (Daventry): Does the hon. Member suggest that my right hon. Friend the Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) or myself suggested for one moment that we should not accept the decision of the United Nations?

Dr. Jeger: No, I was not referring to the hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller) or to his right hon. Friend, but there are hon. Members opposite, as well as on this side of the House, who are not exempt from my castigation. If we appeal to Caesar we must accept Caesar's verdict. We have appealed to Caesar, and we have had the verdict.

I see a number of dangers in the present situation. I have already indicated that I do not accept, and never have accepted up to now, the nationalistic solution of this problem. There is danger, first of all, of inter-Arab struggle. Those who speak for Transjordan have proclaimed that they are not in complete sympathy with the attitude of the Arab Higher Committee, and they have not contributed to some of the discussions which that Committee has just had. It is possible that the rulers of Transjordan are considering whether they will incorporate the districts of Palestine which are now to be given to the Arabs, as distinct from the districts given to the Jews. Then we have the Jewish-Arab struggle—although it is significant that in the country districts, where there are Jewish agricultural settlements, there has been no fighting; the Arabs who live and work there, for and

with the Jews in those settlements, have not tried any violence, because their standard of life is very much higher than it was in the days before the Jewish settlements were built.

The Jews themselves differ in all sorts of ways, and I think that their biggest differences are probably the religious differences. There are orthodox and un-orthodox Jews, and these two groups are already talking of their differences—as we see from Zionist publications. I feel that that is a great danger to the future life of Palestine. If my words carry any weight at all I would beg of them not to accentuate these differences; if my words carry any weight with the Arabs I would beg of them, also, to accept the decision of the United Nations without any further violence.

I have become convinced that this solution is the only one possible at this time, because of what has been happening, and has happened, to the displaced and murdered Jews of Europe. Millions of people were scattered throughout Europe, some of whom were orthodox Jews and others not, as they thought, Jews at all. Between the two there were various gradations of feeling and opinion. The whole lot have been swept away. Many have been murdered. Hitler made the decision as to whether to call them Jews or not, and of the survivors there are a few hundred thousand who are living permanently in concentration camps which, I am sorry to say, have been perpetuated in one form or another since the end of the war. We do not want hundreds of thousands of people living permanently in camps with their families, and with their children being brought up in them. That is not the sort of life for these once highly civilised people.

What are we to do with these people? The Foreign Secretary has said that the various nations ought to come to an agreement each to take a quota, but agreement has not been reached. We may suggest that they should go to a Palestine which is not a Jewish Palestine, but if we do that we come up against Arab opposition. The Arabs will not have Jewish immigration. If these people are not to be exterminated which, I suppose, is an alternative solution, which no one has yet suggested, the only other solution is that they should go among their own people, where they will be accepted, housed, fed,

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

and clothed, and where they will be protected by a certain amount of national sovereignty. I think that a portion of Palestine should be Jewish under Jewish control, so that these people should have a home to which they can go.

There has been a good deal of talk about Jewish immigration, but no one has mentioned in this Debate Arab illegal immigration. It is possible for Arabs to cross the Jordan from Trans-Jordan into Palestine as and when they wish, without let or hindrance. I understand that they often do that when extra help is needed during harvest time. The Arab population of Palestine can rise or fall freely, but it does not fall. It grows continuously, and no one questions the Arab illegal immigration. That is a distinction between the two peoples which, I think, ought not to have been made. I would have liked those Members of the House who have put the Arab point of view to have told us a little more about the Arab war effort, about which we have heard nothing so far. We have not been told that the Arabs staged a revolt against us, that the Grand Mufti, who is Chairman of the Arab Higher Committee, actually broadcast Nazi propaganda from Berlin during the war. That sort of consideration ought to have a place in the minds of those who have been advocating the pro-Arab position in this Debate.

British Governments of the past, and the present, have, I believe, a very great record of achievement in Palestine. After all, it was a British Government which originally worked out the Mandate, and made it possible for any kind of immigration to take place into Palestine. I hope that those who control Jewish opinion and Jewish policy at present will remember that they owe a great deal to the British Government. It is true that we have certain interests in Palestine. It is no secret, of course, that the oil pipelines terminate there and that we have certain strategical interests in the Middle East. These things which are of common interest to ourselves and the Jews who will have to rule that part of Palestine in the future, plus the democratic ideals which are common to us both, make an association between Jewish Palestine and Great Britain absolutely necessary in the future. I hope, therefore, that when present passions have died down, when there has been a settling down of the semi-explosive elements, favourable considera-

tion will be given to the idea of Palestine becoming a British Dominion. I would commend that idea to the Foreign Secretary, and I hope he will bring it before the proper quarters.

But whether Members are pro-Arab, pro-Jew, or neutral, what matters, in the long run is that Arab and Jew must learn to live together in peaceful harmony and without any kind of trouble. In this country it has been shown that people of diverse races and origins can live together without murdering one another. That has been shown in New Zealand, in Canada, and in Belgium—where the Flemings and the Walloons live together. This idea of all people of differing origins, although related, living together in harmony is not a new idea in the history of the world. I hope that, once more, we shall be able to see Jews and Arabs living together in an economic and political relationship that is harmonious and just. There is no reason why in an economically federated Palestine, Arabs should not be part of their Greater Arab Federation, while the Jewish part of Palestine should not be a British Dominion, living in harmony within the British Commonwealth.

1.18 p.m.

Mr. Gammans (Hornsey): I found it a little difficult to follow the argument of the hon. Member for South-East St. Pancras (Dr. Jeger). He started by saying that this problem could have been settled in 1920, which was only another way of saying that it is easy to settle a problem before it becomes a problem. In 1920, there were fewer than 100,000 Jews in Palestine and the problem of active Zionism had not become acute. The Jews at that time had not suffered the appalling horrors of Hitler's persecution; they had not the same urge to leave Europe behind, as they have today.

Dr. Jeger: The hon. Member has confirmed my argument. At that time there was no persecution, the population of Palestine was extremely small, and the Arabs were not conscious of their historic destiny as an Arab federation. It would, therefore, have been easy to partition a country in which there were few Arabs and Jews.

Mr. Gammans: That is another way of saying that it is easy to solve a problem before it has arisen.

225

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Dr. Jeger: When it is a small problem.

Mr. Gammans: The hon. Member pointed out that many Jews wanted to leave Europe behind them. I would remind him that Palestine cannot solve, by itself, the problem of displaced Jewry. We cannot ask the Arabs to do what the rest of the world is not prepared to do—take a certain percentage of displaced persons in Europe, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. I do not want to enter into that controversy, nor into the general controversy which has been thoroughly aired on both sides of the House and within both political parties. I want to ask the Foreign Secretary four or five questions. I am sorry he is not here to answer them, but probably the Colonial Secretary can put them to him. I regard this moment as a sad and sorrowful occasion. We are being asked to endorse a course of action the repercussions of which nobody can predict. In the course of the next few months we may see civil war in the Near East which may not only devastate Palestine but may lead to persecution and butchery in every country in the Near East where there is a Jewish minority. From that situation may arise what the world so much fears, a third world war.

Today, in contrast to the end of the first world war, there is a Power which is prepared to try to disturb the rehabilitation of the stricken world. In every country, Russia is trying to further her own ends, and she believes that her influence can best be extended by unrest and chaos. We may find that Russia, by one means or another, will try to fill the vacuum which we are leaving behind us. I would refer to a speech which was made by Mr. Henderson of the State Department in New York, in which he said:

"The Middle East is a prize most tempting to an aggressive and ambitious great Power. Such a Power might be able, if in possession of strategic facilities and economic resources, to decide the destinies of at least three Continents and to cast dark shadows over the whole world for many years to come."

I am sure that that feeling is in the minds of many hon. Members today when we contemplate what we regard as this inevitable course of action. We feel a sense of failure in our trusteeship. It is a new thing for the British to walk away from their responsibilities and for us to

wash our hands of what may happen when we go. It was not that sort of action which made us a great Power and gave us a great influence in the world. We have failed; perhaps our failure was inevitable, but we must all deplore it all the same.

I am glad that hon. Members have made reference to the British record in Palestine, especially at a time when we have been abused by Jew and Arab alike and when there has been so much deliberate misrepresentation in the United States of America about our motives. There never would have been a Palestine at all, or a Zionist cause to consider, if it had not been for the fact that Great Britain and the Empire poured out blood and treasure in the first world war. It was the troops of ourselves and the Dominions who liberated Palestine. What a sad commentary, when we think of those beautiful cemeteries on the hills of Palestine and the men whom we are leaving behind, to realise that it should all end in this sordid way.

Let us, however, take some pride in our material achievements. The Jewish population has risen very substantially, the Arab population has doubled, and the import—export trade has multiplied itself anything from 10 to 14 times. That is not a bad record of trusteeship in those 25 years. Under our rule, we have built up roads, schools and education generally of which we have every reason to be proud.

Mr. Austin (Stretford): The hon. Member has just said that the Arab population had doubled. Would he enlighten the House with the actual figures?

Mr. Gammans: I shall be delighted. The Arab population was 589,000. It has gone up to 1,101,000. That is roughly double. Palestine did not enjoy those advantages of sound rule before we went there. It remains to be seen whether she will enjoy them when we have gone.

I do not wish to discuss the rival claims of Jews and Arabs. I can see both points of view. I can understand why the Jew, after all he has suffered in Europe, should long for a homeland of his own. In these days of horror it is difficult to find words to describe what the Jew has suffered in Europe during the last 10 or 15 years. No one who has been brought up upon the English Bible can fail to appreciate the emotional appeal of Palestine to the

1 2 3 4 5 6
 1 2
 Reference: **FO 371/61797**
 COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Jew. I can understand, too, the point of view of the Arab, who regards Palestine as his home as well. The Arabs fear, rightly or wrongly, that the Jewish State may overgrow its present boundaries and may threaten the Arab way of life and culture.

I do not blame the Government for the Palestine problem. I do not blame them for the course of action which they feel compelled to take today. I realise the difficulty under which the Colonial Secretary has laboured in the past two years. I imagine that he would like to have had a settlement, and a Cabinet decision, much earlier than he got them. I do not know whether it would have been possible to get an amicable settlement two years ago. It is certainly true that as time has gone on it has been much more difficult to get any agreed settlement at all. I agree also that the right hon. Gentleman has not been helped by some of the things said by his own supporters at the General Election. I know American public opinion reasonably well. During these past two years some of the pledges which have been made, recklessly as I think, have done nothing but harm. They have excited Jews and given Arabs cause to fear, and they have made American public opinion believe that the Palestine problem was capable of easy solution. Those facts should be a warning to us all that we should not take the temptation to make party politics out of international issues.

I come to the questions which I would like to put. What did the Colonial Secretary mean by some phrases he used yesterday? He said:

"The Mandate will, therefore, be terminated some time in advance of the completion of the withdrawal, and the date we have in mind, subject to negotiation with the United Nations Commission, is 15th May."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 11th December, 1947; Vol. 445, c. 1219.]

What does "subject to negotiation with the United Nations Commission" mean? Does it mean that the Commission can, if necessary, make us stay longer or if they are not ready—and they do not show any sign of being half ready by that time—they can compel us to go on? Does it mean that, in those circumstances, we shall wait after 15th May? I will give way if the right hon. Gentleman cares to answer the question.

74 A 25

Mr. Creech Jones: It is the desire of the British Government that the Mandate should, quite definitely, be surrendered by 15th May. The United Nations Commission has been appointed. While it will have a number of duties to perform before it proceeds to Palestine, it will undoubtedly wish to go to Palestine at a very early date. The British Government take the view that there should be only a short period before the termination of the Mandate when the United Nations Commission should arrive. It is a time schedule which has to be worked to. We have made it clear to the United Nations that, as far as the British Government are concerned, 15th May is the time-limit to which Mandate can last. So there is no ambiguity about it. We have to discuss the time schedule with the United Nations Commission, because they are charged, under the decision of the United Nations Assembly, as quickly as they can, to enter into their responsibilities in regard to Palestine. It is merely a question of agreeing to a time-limit, and 15th May represents our furthest date.

Mr. Gamman: It would have been better if the Colonial Secretary had made his statement yesterday on that point in other words, because I read this as being a date about which we were prepared to haggle. I gather from him that this is the final date, and that although we may go before, it is clear that we are not going to go at any time after 15th May. The second question, which I hope the Foreign Secretary will deal with, because it concerns him more than the Colonial Secretary, is how will this evacuation affect our whole balance of strategy in the Near East, and how will it affect what I would call "the home economy" of these islands? The Foreign Secretary, in a Debate in this House on 10th May this year, said that if our interests in the Middle East were lost to us

"the effect on the life of this country would be a considerable reduction in the standard of living. Other parts of the world would suffer too. The British interest in the Middle East contributes substantially not only to the prosperity of the people there, but also to the wage packets of the workers in this country."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 16th May, 1947; Vol. 437, c. 1964.]

We are clearing out of the Near East, and I think that the right hon. Gentleman should comment on his former speech made only eight months ago in this House. Does he still believe that to be true?

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Mr. Gammans.]

Does it mean that we are going to suffer a loss in our standard of living, which heaven knows is low enough now? Does it mean this is something which will affect the working classes and all other classes of the community? If that is so, in fairness to the House and to the country, he should say so.

What about strategy? We have cleared out of Egypt, and have given a sort of one-sided promise to evacuate the Canal Zone. Now we are leaving Palestine. Does this mean that we are virtually abandoning the Near East? How does this fit in with Imperial strategy, and have the other members of the Commonwealth been consulted, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, New Zealand and Australia, in regard to this decision? Do they realise what the abandonment of the Near East may mean to them? Do they realise that from now on we may have to regard our lines of communication as permanently being *via* the Cape of Good Hope? We ought to be told about that, because this is more than a problem merely affecting the Colonial Office.

The next question I wish to ask is in regard to security for British property in Palestine. A lot of people have invested money in Palestine because of the British Mandate. Are these people to be abandoned? Suppose their property is destroyed, pillaged or burned, can they come to the Government and ask for any sort of redress? What about the oil interests? There is a lot of British money there. It is more than a question of the investment of British money, because this part of the world is one of the vital sources of oil supply to this country and to the Royal Navy. What is to happen about that, and have we made arrangements for its protection, or have we abandoned that, too? If it has been abandoned, can the Government assure the House that adequate supplies of oil would be forthcoming from other sources?

I wish to ask a question about immigration. The Colonial Secretary skated over that question a bit thinly. Between now and our handing over, what is to be our policy towards immigration? Suppose that a ship sets out for Marseilles tomorrow, shall we stop it, and if so, what about the people on board? Are they to be carted off to Cyprus? What if a dozen ships set off? Do we take them to

Cyprus, and then on 15th May let out all the people who are there? If that is to happen, there will be a great temptation for Jews to build up a source of strength ready for actual warfare should it break out. It is that sort of provocation which may lead the Arabs to take the sort of action we hope they will not take.

Mr. Janner: Has the hon. Member read the recommendations of the United Nations Organisation? If not, I suggest that he does. It will satisfy him that facilities for immigration are proposed by them.

Mr. Gammans: That is not what I am arguing. I am not arguing about what happens after 15th May, when, if the Zionists charter the Queen Mary, it is no concern of ours. I am concerned with what happens before that date. If ships set out, will they be stopped, and shall we put those on board in Cyprus, or shall we dump the wretched people back in Germany? The Government must say what they are going to do, because this is the sort of tinder which may set the whole of the Near East alight.

Someone has to say a little more than was said yesterday about these loyal civil servants of the Crown. Are they to be pensioned off if they have earned a pension? I hope no one will get up and say that a special branch of the Ministry of Labour has been set up to try to get these people jobs. That is all very well for a man who has spent 15 or 20 years of his life abroad looking forward to a long and honest career under the Crown. It is not much good dumping him back here and trying to find him a job which will provide him with nothing like the income he has been receiving. The Government have a special responsibility for these men, and should see whether these people cannot continue their careers somewhere in the Civil Service at home or in the Colonial Empire. It will be a shabby and shameful act if we just bring them back, giving them either a gratuity or some small pension, and expecting the Ministry of Labour somehow or other to absorb them into employment.

Mr. Creech Jones: I thought I made it clear that an indication of Government policy in this matter had already been announced, both in Palestine and in this country. We are as concerned as the hon. Member is in regard to the position of

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

the Services, and also, of course, in regard to the Colonial administrators. Very considerable discussion has already taken place, and it is hoped that I shall be in a position to make an announcement very shortly as to our final decision. Meanwhile, I think their apprehensions have been removed. We shall behave generously, and I do not think anyone will have cause to complain that the Government have not behaved properly.

Mr. Gammans: That is all very well, but we heard that about Burma and India. I do not want the Government to turn round and merely say that they will behave generously, but to come forward with something better than a platitude of that sort. Here we are at home taking on a large number of people in nationalised industries and in the Civil Service generally, and we have vacancies in the Colonial Service. I want to see those men being able to continue their service under the Crown, not merely being given a small pension and then handed over to the Ministry of Labour which is asked to do the best it can for them. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will be able to say what he is going to do. We have to treat these men not merely with justice but with some generosity.

Those are the five questions I wanted to ask, and the right hon. Gentleman has been good enough to answer two of them during my speech. I hope, however, that the Foreign Secretary will deal with the larger aspect of the statement he made about the standard of living of the people of this country being tied to our prestige and influence in the Near East and also to wider questions of Imperial strategy.

Finally I would repeat what has been said by almost all hon. Members who have spoken, that, now this decision has been made, let there be no going back on it. I am quite sure that perhaps even up to this Debate there has been a feeling in the minds of some Jews and Arabs, and also the United States, that there was an element of bluff in what we were saying, that we did not intend to clear out, that we were prepared to hold the Mandate baby a bit longer. I hope that as a result of this Debate no misapprehensions on that point will exist any longer.

1.42 p.m.

Mr. H. Hynd (Hackney, Central): I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for South-East St. Pancras (Dr. Jeger)

as to the deplorable anti-British feeling that exists on both sides. I have recently come back from Palestine and have experienced it there. It is indeed deplorable, in view of the record of the Government in this matter, and in view of the settlement that has now been made, a settlement which I regard as the best solution in the light of all the circumstances. Also I think it is a great pity that this settlement has met with so little enthusiasm on the part of the Arab representatives. After all, the Arabs are getting another state out of this. People talk all the time about the new Jewish State, but there is a new Arab State, and while they take up the attitude that they are being deprived of something, we must bear in mind that the last independent Arab State in that part of the world was in 63 B.C. and, up to the first world war, it was under Turkish domination—

Mr. Stokes: Oh, no.

Mr. Hynd: At the time, at any rate, of the first world war.

Mr. Stokes: Four hundred years ago.

Mr. Hynd: Then they were liberated by British Forces. The whole of this Debate, quite rightly, seems to have resolved itself about what is to happen now in the transition period and that, after all, is the vital issue. I regret that I have not heard anyone so far suggest that there will be direct consultation immediately between the Government and the two States concerned. It is essential that they should begin to discuss the details of the handing over of power, and in that connection I must reinforce what has been said by several hon. Members, that the Government might just as well make up their minds now to recognise, on the one hand, the right and the power of the Arab authorities to maintain order in their part of the country, and of the Haganah to maintain order in the Jewish part of the country. I am not at all attracted by the proposals for some kind of a new international police force. It reminds me far too much of the Black and Tans. Why not use the force which everybody recognises exists already? In that connection, too, I think recognition of the Haganah might be valuable in controlling the extremist Jewish Forces in Palestine.

When I was there the other week I was told that, while over 90 per cent. of the Jews were living in terror of the Irgun

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Mr. Hynd.]

and the Stern gang, Haganah could control them quite easily if it had half a chance. When hon. Members talk about the Jews in Palestine being antagonistic to the British Forces, I think their tacit acquiescence in what has been going on has been the result of the terroristic methods used by those extremist forces. I suggest that we should recognise Haganah, recognise the right of the Arabs to maintain order also, and withdraw the British members of the Palestine Police Force to the Jerusalem area, the new area that is to be under international control.

The hon. and gallant Member for Ayr Burghs (Sir T. Moore) tried to draw an unfortunate parallel between the situation in Ireland in 1920 and the situation in Palestine today. Dangerous and wrong deductions might be drawn from such a parallel, for the situation is not the same at all. In Ireland it was a question of that country being part of the United Kingdom, and there was a big split amongst the Irishmen themselves as to what should be done. In Palestine we are there primarily under a Mandate from the League of Nations, with the responsibility of some day putting Palestine on its own feet. I will not follow that any further except to point out that it is quite wrong to base any deductions on such a comparison.

One point which has not been followed up as it might have been, is the possibility expressed in the Press of recruitment for the Forces of either side from this country. Would the Foreign Secretary tell us whether the conditions of the Foreign Enlistment Act will be applied in this case, and whether steps will be taken to prevent recruitment in this country for either the Jewish or Arab forces? Also, will my right hon. Friend take the opportunity to say whether it is true, as reported in the Press, that the Transjordan Frontier Defence Force took part in a certain incident in Palestine yesterday? If that is the case, or if there were any suspicion of that happening in the future, I suggest that the Transjordan Force should be withdrawn immediately beyond the frontier of Transjordan.

My hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. Philips Price) remarked on the necessity for keeping illegal immigrants out of Palestine, and asked who will keep them out when the new

State is set up. He need not worry about that. Whatever we may feel about our Jewish friends, we never say that they are not businessmen and realists, and I feel that when the new Jewish State is set up, restrictions on immigration are likely to be even more severe than they are under the present regime. The hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller) asked yesterday whether Jews and Arabs would have full voting rights under the new set-up. That is covered by the Report of the ad hoc Committee on the Palestine question adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 29th November where it says:

"The election regulations in each State shall be drawn up by the provisional council of government and approved by the Commission. Qualified voters for each State for this election shall be persons over 18 years of age who are: (A) Palestinian citizens residing in that State and (B) Arabs and Jews residing in the State, although not Palestinian citizens who, before voting, have signed a notice of intention to become citizens of such State."

This should clear away any dubiety on that point.

The hon. Member for Orpington (Sir W. Smithers) seemed to be suggesting some kind of a new body of crusaders, or some military force to protect the Holy Places. Do we really need to anticipate that there is going to be any difficulty in that direction? The Holy Places have been respected in recent outbreaks, and I see no reason to believe that there will be any danger when the new Arab and Jewish States are set up. My own experience was that most of these Holy Places are in the charge of Arabs or Jews, and are very well respected. Indeed a young Arab who showed me through the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth made a rather surprising remark. "There are no Jews in Nazareth," he said "we are all Roman Catholics." The hon. Member for Hornsey (Mr. Gammans), who happens to represent me in Parliament, much against my will, seemed guilty of one contradiction. He said it was a sad commentary that it should all end in this sorry way. Then he contradicted himself by going on to point out the great advances made in Palestine when he talked about the improvement in exports, and the rest. I suggest that that shows our policy has been successful, and that we have nothing to apologise for in what has happened there.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1			2	

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

For more than a generation we have endeavoured to fulfil an obligation upon which in the last two years we have lavished vast sums of money, and in which many lives have been lost. To those who criticise from a distance the work of the Mandatory Power, I would say, "Could you have done any better?" Now at last we are laying down the burden. We are handing it back to that body on which has fallen the mantle of the League of Nations. With that decision I agree, however much I regret the circumstances which have made it necessary. There is indeed, in my judgment, no alternative. Of course we must do our best to facilitate the transfer of the burden. That is only right and proper. But that we should do more than our share, and particularly that we should continue to carry the burden of transfer unaided until it suits the convenience of others—such a claim is neither just nor reasonable. If there is general agreement over the conclusions of the United Nations Committee that the Mandate is unworkable, there is on the other hand no

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

232

1389

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

185 390

[Mr. Eden.]

unanimity in the United Nations, as there has been no unanimity in this House, over this recommendation of partition as a solution, although a majority, as the hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman) rightly said, a substantial majority, favour it.

Personally I had always hoped that it might be possible to achieve an independent Palestinian State in which Arab and Jew would live and work in harmony. If I have had misgivings in the past about partition, and I have had such misgivings, it has been in part at least because it has always seemed to me to be a matter of the utmost difficulty to create out of Palestine a Jewish State in which the Jews had a real chance to live—what our French friends call *un Etat viable*—to make such a State for the Jews, without at the same time placing within that State considerable areas which had overwhelming Arab majorities. That has always seemed to me one of the fundamental difficulties of partition, and it is certainly what has happened in the scheme before us now.

I think that if we are to be fair we must also realise that while partition gives the Jews something they have always wanted, that is, an independent State as opposed to a National Home in the Holy Land, it does not give them all they want, since the Zionist ambition has been to spread over the whole of Palestine. But, I think the House will agree that partition, certainly this scheme of partition, bears more heavily on the Arabs who will not only lose a portion of the land they regard as their own but will see included in that Jewish land, a large Arab population. There is the position, and at this late hour there are certain realities which we all have to face—Arabs, Jews and those of us who have no wish but to see harmony between the two races.

Partition has the backing of two-thirds of the nations of the world, who have given their decision as the outcome of the initiative of the British Government. This seems to me to be the inescapable fact. However little we may like this decision, and I must say that I, for one, am far from happy about it, I cannot see that we have any choice but to conform to it, though I must confess that I do not think I altogether followed the argument of the hon. Member for Cheltenham

(Mr. Lipson) last night in his conclusion of what was evidently a very sincere speech. It was, after all, His Majesty's Government who took the initiative in asking the United Nations to pronounce upon this matter. As members of that organisation, it really is not open to us to seek to repudiate their decision because we do not like their conclusions. If we thought there was a risk of that and a risk we were not prepared to resist, we ought never to have placed the proposition before them.

Mr. Lipson (Cheltenham): I am afraid I did not make myself clear last night, but I did not suggest that the Government should repudiate the decision, but that we should refuse to take any part in implementing a decision of which we do not approve.

Mr. Eden: I did not understand that that was the hon. Gentleman's view, and I am glad that he has pointed that out. That brings us to another point which we have to face, and I am glad to carry the hon. Gentleman with me so far. This applies equally to my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for the Isle of Ely (Major Legge-Bourke). I have heard this argument that we should use our efforts to bring Arabs and Jews together. I would say that, to attempt now, at this rather late hour, to try and bring Arabs and Jews together, after all our previous efforts have failed, seems to me to be a policy which holds out no hope whatever. Unhappily, it is only necessary to read what was in "The Times" yesterday from their correspondent to show how far our authority had already vanished. I, for one, could not possibly, in these conditions, agree to an indefinite and increasing military commitment upon ourselves to keep order in a State against the wishes of both sides in the State.

So I say that we have no alternative, in my judgment, but to accept this decision of the United Nations, but this does not mean that these proposals do not require some elaboration and some modification in detail. I think, for example, that the boundaries suggested require more careful examination, and some of the criticisms made earlier in the Debate on that score seem well deserved. I am by no means convinced that there is a case for including the Negeb in the Jewish area. There was also the extraordinary decision to include in the Jewish State Jaffa and its

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	2	2	2	2

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

233

environs, which would have resulted in placing about 100,000 Arabs in the Jewish area. I gather that the sub-committee of the United Nations have agreed to rectify this anomaly, and that the Jewish Agency will readily grant freedom of transit between the Jaffa enclave and the main part of the Arab State. If so, that would indeed be something gained.

I believe also that the most categorical assurance must be given by the United Nations as to the inviolability of the frontiers, once they are determined. Without such assurances, both sides are going to rest uneasily for an indefinite period. Apart from the psychological effect of this uncertainty, it would place an intolerable burden on both these small States, and especially on the new Arab State, if they had to maintain defences against the fear of encroachment.

This brings me to one of the essential conditions of any solution which has a real chance to endure. There must be a measure of economic unity between the two States, for only chaos can result if they each go their separate ways in Customs, in currency and in communications.

Nor should we altogether abandon the hope that co-operation in matters of common interest may, in the course of time, bring together the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine. This would, to some extent, ease the inevitable difficulty which must arise from partition, whatever the final plan may be, because there must remain in a large number of Arabs in the Jewish State and some Jews, at any rate, in the Arab State. Here I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary whether he or the United Nations have given any consideration to a planned transfer of minorities? The House will remember that this point was not overlooked by the Royal Commission of 1937, and, no doubt, they had in mind the successful transfer of a million Greeks and a smaller number of Turks in 1922. The difficulty of the Peel Commission was that they were dealing only with Palestine, and, therefore, they had the problem of whether there was room for the transfer of 300,000 Arabs to other lands in Palestine. I should have thought that the question which now arises is whether, with the co-operation of the adjoining Arab States, room might not be found to absorb some part of the Arab minority which

will be left in the Jewish State. I should have thought that this was a question worth pursuing.

There is one other comment which I should like to make, and it concerns the appointment of the members of the Commission that U.N.O. is going to set up. Six countries, I understand, have been chosen to nominate representatives, and I also understand that not one of them has yet done so. I hope that that does not mean that U.N.O. is inclined to think that there is no particular urgency in the matter, because we can always carry on until they are ready, for that is truly not the position. There are, indeed, several important points on which, if I may say so, we have been left in the dark, and which I hope the right hon. Gentleman will desire to clear up. There seemed to me to be too many references in the Colonial Secretary's speech to matters which would be "explored by the United Nations Commissioners at an early date." That phrase had an ominous ring to me.

Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us, for example, whether the United Nations have any kind of timetable before them at all? Can he give us any information as to what are their ideas, if they have any ideas, as to the force, if any, which the United Nations propose to make available for Palestine when the Mandate comes to an end? It may be that they have decided that they do not want one, or, perhaps, that they do. If so, what is the force, and when will it be ready to operate? There has also been mentioned the vital matter of Jewish immigration between now and the time when we surrender the Mandate. Have the British Government made up their minds as to what they propose to do with Jewish illegal immigrants now detained in Cyprus? I think that is a point upon which the House ought to be informed.

I want to put one more point to the right hon. Gentleman on this question of the date of the surrender of the Mandate, because the Colonial Secretary, earlier this afternoon, when not so many hon. Members were in the House, referred to this question of date and gave further clarifications, but we want to be assured that the date of 15th May is not a date which is subject to negotiation with the committee of the United Nations; that is to say, that we say that it is our definite date on which we shall go, and that it

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

74 A 32

I will, first of all, deal with the questions which have been raised both by the last speaker and by many others about the termination of the Mandate. We have

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

1	2	3	4	5	6
	1			2	

235

385

Palestine

12 DÉCEMBER 1947

Palestine

1396

fixed, after the most careful consideration, the date of 15th May. That date was arrived at having regard to all the negotiations that have to be conducted. The transfer of power to the United Nations is not simply a matter of walking out of Palestine. They are members of the sterling area. There is the whole question of currency, trade, and a variety of economic things, which I will not enumerate, but which have to be dealt with with very great care. In addition to the mere transference of power, one does not want to add to the chaos by economic disorder as well. When we examined all the things—which, I am sure, the House will not want me to go into in any detail—that had to be done to carry out an orderly transfer, we felt that if we fixed a date any earlier than 15th May, we might fall down on it, and that the transfer would not be complete. I must remind the House that, whatever one may think of the Government, there is in foreign affairs, to use the colloquial, “a pretty big plateful” of problems going on at the same time, and Palestine is only one of them. There are the East and Europe.

May I just put in a word for our officials? All the officials of the Government, particularly the higher officials, who have to deal with these intricate problems, are just being worked to death at the present moment. We had to take into account all these things—available staff, experts, and everybody we could call on—in order to try to see whether we could make an orderly arrangement. If it is found that the negotiations on all these matters with the United Nations move more quickly than we think, and we can fix an earlier date, we shall do so. We should like to have accepted the suggested date in February, but we found it was physically impossible to do so, and we have had to tell the United Nations that fact. On the other hand, we have indicated to them—and this deals with the point about setting up the Commission—that they must get on with the Commission because 15th May is the last date. We are definitive on that, and, therefore, there can be no misunderstanding of our position. I think that clears up the point which the hon. and learned Member for Daventry (Mr. Manningham-Buller) raised last night.

Then, I have been asked whether the withdrawal of troops can be completed

more speedily. Here, again, I know it is the usual method to have a shot at the War Office and other people about these things, but we really went into it with very great care, and we could not fix a date about which we could be definite without very great loss. After all that we have put into Palestine for the last 30 years, I cannot see why we should have a loss. I do not think we are entitled to lose anything at all. I do not believe there is any need. I must remind the House that we did build up great communications and, as everyone knows, there was a great base in Palestine. We cannot, and we ought not, to waste the taxpayers' money unnecessarily. Therefore, I do not anticipate trouble over that side of it. We think that by 1st August we can do it.

One of the things we have had to take into account is that we are pledged to this House to bring home 258,000 men, independent of these men, by 31st March. Shipping is a very great problem and the re-deployment of these great forces is an enormous thing. I must say this, that in our balance of payments position one of the great handicaps which have been hindering our restoration is that this war was so world-wide, and we have had to use our shipping so long to get our stores back, and to get our men back, that we have not got our shipping back into an earning capacity as fast as we had hoped to do. This country is going through it a little, and while we have to turn extra shipping on to this problem in order to meet this date—together with what we are already committed to—it does mean a very grave loss of earnings for the economy of this country in consequence.

Having told our Forces that we were going to take them out under the demobilisation plan of 1948, and the dates having been given to the House, we had to try and work this scheme in without disappointing those we had already told we were going to take out. If it had been otherwise we would have had trouble in the Army, because of the pledges given. So that 1st August, bearing all these facts in mind, and the associated facts and circumstances—the transport and the rest—was the very best date to which we could absolutely pledge ourselves. But here again, if circumstances arise in which we can speed this thing up to bring it earlier, we shall do it. The trouble was

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

74 A 34

"The election regulations in each State shall be drawn up by the Provisional Council of Government and approved by the Commission. Qualified voters for each State for this election shall be persons over 18 years of age who are (a) Palestinian citizens residing in that State and (b) Arabs and Jews residing in the State, although not Palestinian citizens, who, before voting have signed a notice of intention to become citizens of such State."

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

237

Palestine

12 DECEMBER 1947

Palestine

1400

So I think the position is quite clear that they all have a vote. In fact, one of my arguments in these discussions about federal states and cantonisation and so on has been much on the lines of that of the hon. Member for Central Hackney (Mr. H. Hynd) this morning. I cannot believe that when these states are set up everybody will vote either as Jews or Arabs. Some of them might even be Conservatives or Liberals, and the rest Socialists or Communists; I cannot tell, but I do not think that ultimately they will vote strictly according to religion or race. I do not think they ever do, certainly not if they follow Western methods. I cannot answer if they follow other methods. The other qualification is that no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants on the grounds of race, religion, language or sex. Accordingly, I think we have covered the ground so far as providing a democratic basis for the states is concerned.

I very much welcome the contributions which have been made by hon. Members in this Debate and the tributes that have been paid to the achievements of the British Administration and police in Palestine, a great number of whom have made the supreme sacrifice in the course of their duties. I associate myself and His Majesty's Government with those tributes. Many devoted public servants have spent the greater part of their lives in that service, in building up the country in very difficult circumstances. Certainly those with whom I have been associated have really wanted to make a success of that great task but, owing to racial and religious difficulties, they could not get the roots of the administration into the people. That was not their fault and, in spite of that, they have done a great job. From time to time they have been subject to considerable unjust criticism, and we are under a great obligation to them.

The question has been asked what sort of treatment they will get now that their careers are cut short. I am authorised to say that they will receive adequate compensation. I cannot make a detailed announcement at this stage—the question will have to be gone into—but I assure the House that in winding up the affairs of the Palestine Government, His Majesty's Government will make it their duty to ensure that those whose careers are personally affected will get a square

deal. As a member of the Government making this pledge, I am fortified by the knowledge that there will be plenty of hon. Members in this House to hold me to it if there is any attempt to depart from it. In any case, I think it is a case of "penny wise and pound foolish" if, in doing a job of this sort, we are mean in our treatment of people whose careers we have to interrupt. So far as I am concerned, that will be the spirit in which I shall deal with this problem.

One of the criticisms which have been levelled against us has been that we allowed two years to elapse before reaching the decision to lay down the Mandate. I welcome this opportunity of answering that criticism. We have been told that solutions could obviously have been imposed at an earlier stage. I have always believed, and I believe now, that in dealing with other people the method of riding roughshod is wrong. It does not succeed. In Palestine we were faced with an accumulation of bitterness and hostility. If at any time since the present Government came into office, since the end of the war, we had attempted to coerce Arabs in the interest of Jews, or Jews in the interest of Arabs, we should have set alight a conflagration for which we were not prepared to accept the responsibility. I am quite convinced that in view of the great and difficult problems, which the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) appreciates as well as I do, the starting of a conflagration in the Middle East would have been a disaster for the world. I was not prepared to do it, and I do not apologise for not having done it. I believe that the right thing to do is to try to get agreement. Had the British Administration been left unfettered to handle this problem, as it ought to have been, without interference from others in other countries, I quite believe that we should have been successful. I say that emphatically. Over and over again we got very near to a solution, only to have the cup dashed from our lips. It is bitter to have to face this situation now.

I wish to say this on the subject of war: Any fool can start one. It does not take a very clever man to start a war, but it takes an awful lot of work to clear it up after there has been one. Having been on this job for months and months, and having studied the problem in all its aspects, I think that the Arab feeling on this question has been underestimated. It

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

[Mr. Bevin.]

has got to be assessed at its correct value by everybody, or we shall not get a peaceful settlement of this problem. It is because I want it assessed at its proper value that I do not want the Arabs to be dismissed as if they were nobody, and as if one has only got to do this, that or the other and everything will be all right. That is not the way to treat this vexed and very serious problem.

Let us assume for a moment that we had gone to the United Nations without allowing the two years to elapse. What would have been said to us? Two conditions would have arisen. First of all, we should have been asked, "Have you tried to settle it yourself as the Charter lays down?" We tried. Secondly, let us assume that we had tried to impose a settlement by force, or alternatively, that we had proposed a trusteeship. The interested states would then have had to be consulted. Either one of them could have taken us to the Security Council for having endangered peace and security in the world, and we should have been before the United Nations not as voluntarily laying down the Mandate in the manner that we have done, but accused of disturbing the peace of the world. Such was the situation as between Jew and Arab that I did not think that course would contribute to a final and satisfactory solution.

The other accusation is that I turned down the Report of the Anglo-American Committee. Was there ever a more outrageous and inaccurate statement than that? Why do hon. Members make that accusation? They know it is not true. What happened was that I got the Cabinet to agree to the Anglo-American Committee's Report. I said that if they came to a unanimous decision I would accept it and would recommend the Cabinet to accept it also. But what happened?

The United States would take only one point—100,000 immigrants—and the Jews would take only one point. And I was not prepared to accept the report of an Anglo-American Commission on one point and discard the other nine which were vital to its success. That any Member of this House—especially a Member of my own party—should make these accusations against his colleague without foundation is, I think, most unfortunate. I hope I have cleared that up.

74 A 36

The second thing we did was to convene the conference on the Morrison plan. Indeed, if one takes the majority decision that they are now operating, it will be seen that they have had to have an economic council for the whole territory. I have never yet been able to see how a little country like that, with railways, post, telegraph and the rest, can be economically run and can be made viable if divided. This is not a question of prejudice or anything like that; it is merely a question of how you are going to make a viable State, and the United Nations have had, in an indirect way, to come to the same kind of conclusion as the Morrison plan—or what was afterwards modified and called the Bevin plan. In fact, you have to have something in that form.

I am not going, and His Majesty's Government are not going, to oppose the United Nations decision. The decision has been taken. As someone has said we have tried our best. We have no intention of opposing that decision, but we cannot ourselves undertake, either individually or collectively in association with others, to impose that decision by force. We have been in this country over 30 years and, whatever we do, if we use British forces now, we shall be in a very difficult position. Therefore we have made it perfectly clear, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies said in his statement on the first day, what our position is, and that we adhere to.

Mr. Warbey (Luton): Can we be quite clear on that point? Do I understand from what the Foreign Secretary has just said that if the Security Council were to decide that collective enforcement action was necessary in respect of Palestine, this country would not take its share as one of the members of the United Nations?

Mr. Bevin: That is what the hon. Member must understand. It is for the Security Council to lay down itself how they will find the forces, and the form of the forces, but I cannot use British organised forces nor can I be a party at the present moment, with security forces as a whole not yet organised in the United Nations, of putting British forces under other commands. When the scheme is finally worked out of what this United Nations force is to be, what its command is to be, and what its obligations are to be, not

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

239

only in Palestine but as part of the international set-up, then we will take our corner, but to put British forces under another command in this way in an isolated instance is a thing we are not prepared to do.

We feel we have done our best and the problem of enforcement must be left to others. While we remain responsible for the Mandate, we shall do everything in our power to prevent things getting out of hand in Palestine as a result of the bitterness between the two communities there. In addition, I have on behalf of His Majesty's Government—and will continue to do so—to impress upon all those principally concerned, whether Arab or Jew, the grave responsibilities which they have and the necessity for keeping their feelings under control, to avoid any form of incitement, to prevent loss of life and unnecessary damage to the economy and future of Palestine. I think in any attempt to fight it out they will do more damage to each other than they will gain. In saying this I cannot minimise the bitterness, the very real bitterness, in Palestine today. In spite of our efforts, that bitterness has grown over the last 30 years.

Of course, the Palestine problem might have evolved differently and might have evolved to a satisfactory solution if it had not been for Hitler. The Hitler regime, as some one said this morning, naturally created an intensified Jew consciousness because of the persecution and the bitterness that went on. It threw upon the British administration, as a result of that persecution a task which was multiplied many times. The evolutionary character of the National Home was destroyed and hence the difficulty arose. But I must say this. It could have been easier. It can be eased now by the United Nations if they will take a decision I have pleaded for over and over again. Even now they have taken their decision on Palestine—with which I am not going to quarrel or criticise—that does not solve the Jewish problem in Europe. Yet it requires such a comparatively small effort on the part of the countries of the world, if they took their proper quota and helped to clear this thing up for once and all, in addition to the numbers who might go into Palestine in the ordinary way.

If I may say so, I think this country has been placed in a very invidious posi-

tion to be lectured and cajoled as to what we ought to do about Palestine, when the doors of other countries had not been thrown open to these people to assist in this terrible tragedy they have had to go through. Even now, I say it would be one of the contributory factors towards peace and easement and the prevention of blood letting if the immigration doors are opened. In any circumstances, even when you take the total number that is put forward, Palestine cannot find a way to solving this problem. The task of the Army and the others at the end, when the Mandate is handed over, will be to protect themselves in the withdrawal. They must get out at the date I have mentioned. I think I have dealt with all the questions.

Britain has a great record in the Middle East. Since the first World War these Arab states have been created. I do not give credit to my own party alone for what Britain has done. I believe, after reading all the papers and all the records of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office concerning this problem, that it has been the great desire of every Government of this country from 1917 till now to create an independent State of Palestine, in the hope that these two Semitic races, different in religion yet common in origin, could find a way to live together, and that within this arrangement, within Palestine, they could find a way to contribute to the new development of the Arab and Jewish organisms in the Middle East. No doubt, the Jews could have brought great abilities, organising capacity. The Arabs, having found their freedom, need it. If only Jews and Arabs could get over this racial difficulty.

This country has found scientists, experts, technicians, all kinds of people to try to build up the Middle East, not merely as a strategic centre, but as a centre in which a new social order and development might take place. Great irrigation schemes now have been worked out, and, I am happy to say, are being started in the various parts of the Middle East, which in time, when completed, will rate with the T.V.A. scheme in America. All this great preliminary, scientific, engineering and other work has been going on with our assistance, and in the end will contribute to a higher standard of life for the masses of people, whose life has not changed very much for 1,000 years but who have a new-found

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

240
1405

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1405

[Mr. Bevin.] nationalism, a new impulse urging them on to catch up with Western civilisation. Britain has played a very great part in that work. I can only hope that this difficulty between the Arabs and Jews will not conflict with that beneficent task. I hope the great friendship for both of them, which has been historically associated with this country, will continue and I sincerely hope that the passing shadows may finally be dispelled, and that we can succeed in bringing the Arabs and Jews together.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington that anyone who tries now to go out with some proposal for Arabs and Jews to meet, is bound to be disappointed. On the other hand, there is the United Nations' decision. There it is, no one intending to challenge it, no one intending to turn back on that judgment. There that decision is of that world organism, whether we agree with it or not. It is on the statute book of that great organisation. May it be possible to implement it. If it is, and if my colleagues or I can render any assistance, with advice, with help, with our officials, with our administrative ability, with our historical knowledge, to smooth out the transition, to try to prevent the divisions from being widened—in other words to do anything possible to promote concord, friendship and amity between these peoples—we shall do it.

That is the principle and policy we shall follow. The decision having been taken, I hope that nothing will be said in this country by Press or public which will make more difficult the task of ending this age-old controversy, of bringing these two great peoples together, and of ushering into the Middle East a co-operative effort, instead of the long, long strife that has embittered it in the past.

Sir W. Smithers: The right hon. Gentleman has not been able to give any considered opinion on the enclave round Jerusalem and the holy places with access to the sea. Will he give an assurance that he will look into that and do all he can to persuade the United Nations organisation to do so?

Mr. Bevin: I did not refer to that because it is clearly set out in the Report, and it was referred to by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I think it is quite

74 A 38

clear. I forgot to mention it. I was asked whether we were tendering advice and so on. Sir Alan Burns of the Colonial Office, a great expert, is on the Committee rendering assistance.

Mr. Janner: Will my right hon. Friend answer some of the questions I put to him at the end of my speech yesterday? They are practical questions. The first one was whether it is true that the civil guard that is being formed is not being given arms, while members of Haganah are being arrested because they have got arms to protect the Jews? Another question was, Does he intend to open a port shortly?

Mr. Bevin: I cannot agree to open a port until we lay down the Mandate. We cannot have two administrations at one time. Really, it is impossible. I had better be quite frank about these things. I do not want to get into conflict with the Jews, and I hope the Jews will not get into conflict with His Majesty's Government, His Majesty's Navy or Army. It is a little patience that is required. There are but a few months to pass before we lay down the Mandate. As to the other point about arming, I am not conversant with the details, but I do not think it is right for us to begin arming anybody in Palestine—either side. [An Hon. Member: "We are arming the Arabs."] I do not know that we have armed anybody at all.

2.59 p.m.

Mr. Cooper-Key (Hastings): I think I am expressing the opinion of both sides of the House when I say that the Colonial Secretary has had the sympathy of all of us in the last few months in the task he has been undertaking. The Foreign Secretary's speech has achieved two things. First, I think he has made some firm observations which will help towards an understanding of our attitude in the interim period until surrender of the mandate. Secondly, I think he has satisfied both sides of the House on the questions put to him during the Debate. Thirdly, and less constructively, I would point out that I arrived today at 11 o'clock with a prepared speech which he has succeeded in smashing to smithereens.

I did not entirely agree with the Foreign Secretary with regard to the two years' delay in submitting this problem to the

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	1	1

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

241

United Nations. Nor did I find real satisfaction in the right hon. Gentleman's speech, as to why this two years' procrastination, and the consequent loss of £200 million and many valuable lives, should have been justified by the action taken by the Government. The Foreign Secretary failed to answer a question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey (Mr. Gammans) on Imperial strategy, the effect of this decision on our Far Eastern and Mediterranean interests, and whether or not consultations have taken place with other interested Powers on the strategic situation of the Suez Canal tying up with our Imperial strategy. Nor did he refer to the effect of the wage packets of the workers, which was also referred to by my hon. Friend. In that regard, I would repeat the statement made by the Foreign Secretary earlier this year:

"The British interests in the Middle East contribute substantially, not only to the prosperity of the people there, but also to the wage packets of the workers in this country."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 16th May, 1947; Vol. 437, c. 1964.]

Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would make a statement showing what effect this decision will have upon the wage packets of the workers of this country.

This rather sordid and complicated matter has several very simple issues. I believe it was right for us to refer the Palestinian problem to the United Nations organisation; but I believe it was wrong that we should have waited two and a half years before doing so.

Mr. Lever (Manchester, Exchange): I understand the hon. Member to be complaining because the Government waited two and a half years before sending this matter to U.N.O. Why, then, has the hon. Member waited two and a half years before tendering that advice to the Government?

Mr. Oliver Stanley (Bristol, West): If the hon. Member reads the Debates of last year, he will find that we did tender advice.

Mr. Cooper-Key: The Government are in possession of very many more facts than I am. Having given the problem over to U.N.O. for their decision, it is right for us to accept that decision. About that, there can be no doubt. I was rather disturbed by the taint of

political expediency rather than statesmanship in the method by which the U.N.O. decision was arrived at. If so great a question is to be settled by U.N.O., and if we are to have hope for the future, it is essential that the world in general should have clear confidence in an international organisation. Yesterday, I received a message from someone who was at Lake Success, and which differed considerably from observations made yesterday by hon. Members opposite. This man writes:

"When on 26th November partition was on the verge of defeat reluctant State Department officials were swept aside, and the political machine went into full action—and the Americans say so themselves. Of those voting for partition, Haiti and the Philippines had told the Assembly that they would never agree to the dismemberment of Palestine. Liberia had assured the Arabs privately, a few days before partition was arrived at, that they opposed partition. Paraguay stayed away to avoid voting. There could be no doubt that pressure achieved those changes of front. I understand, further, this morning, that there is news of an attempt to institute a Congressional inquiry in the States into the pressure which was brought to bear on certain delegations, in particular Liberia."

There seems to me to have been some rather sordid lobbying in arriving at a decision in this case—

Mr. Janner: I am sure that the hon. Member would not wish to create a wrong impression, to suggest that Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, America, or Russia were compelled, by force of sinister circumstances such as he has suggested, to vote in the manner in which they did vote.

Mr. Cooper-Key: I am not suggesting that. I am referring to those countries which I have just mentioned.

Mr. Janner: Well?

Mr. Cooper-Key: What does the hon. Member mean by that?

Mr. Janner: I will say what I mean. The hon. Member has just said that the Arabs had been assured by one of the States, which, obviously, must have been under pressure by them, that they would vote against partition.

Mr. Cooper-Key: I am referring only to the countries I specifically mentioned; I am not referring to Australia. I believe that the danger which faces us is very much greater than would appear from

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

212

1409

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1410

[Mr. Cooper-Key.]

some of the speeches we have heard. The decision of the United Nations has been described by one of the parties as "illegal and unjust," and it is noteworthy that this has been backed by 13 negative votes and 10 abstentions, comprising the Muslim world of 200 million people as opposed to a total Jewish population of between 10 million and 20 million.

I am very glad that the Government have decided that there must be no change or postponement of the date for surrendering the Mandate. I hope that preparations will now be made—in view of the weak nature of the committee which has been elected to carry out this Partition—immediately to protect the interests of nationals, and to continue health, transport, and financial services during the transitional period. I would like to re-emphasise the weak nature of this committee. I think it is generally considered to be far weaker than it should be to deal with an advanced problem of this kind, and we must, therefore, do all we can to impress upon the Commission the difficulty of finding a working solution to this problem, bearing in mind that we, who are great Colonial experts, have failed to find a solution during the last 30 years.

3.9 p.m.

Mr. Mikardo (Reading): I think the House will have been interested, and perhaps a little surprised, to have heard my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary today in a mood and manner rather different from those which usually characterise his speeches. There appeared to be none of his usual effervescence, none of his usual ebullience and aggressiveness, none of the signs we expect to see when he jumps on his charger, puts on his armour, and rides off in several directions at once. No, my right hon. Friend was a subdued Foreign Secretary today, and the House must have sympathised with him a great deal in coming here to wind up this Debate which, doubtless, he hopes is the Palestine Debate to end all Palestine Debates.

Two years ago, my right hon. Friend said boldly that he would stake his reputation on finding a solution of this problem, and he must have had the feeling today that what has happened was that that rather thoughtless, unwise, and perhaps a little arrogant boast had sneaked

round behind him and had started to stab him in the back. It was perhaps his consciousness that he was not altogether convincing in blaming the Americans for his failure to make good his boast that caused my right hon. Friend to be in such a subdued mood.

I want to comment upon three topics that were touched upon by the right hon. Gentleman. The first was his saying quite bluntly that, although he accepted—I thought he did it, at best, grudgingly—the decision of the United Nations organisation, he believed in the Morrison plan, as it was called, the three-Power federalist plan. Of course, my right hon. Friend has a complete right to believe in that plan, but he has no right to pretend, as he tried laboriously to do, that the present decision is the same as the Morrison plan. On two occasions my right hon. Friend said words to the effect that, after all, the United Nations solution was more or less the same as the federalist plan.

The most outstanding characteristic of the Morrison plan was that it was a three-party plan with the British in it. The most outstanding characteristic of the findings of all the members of U.N.S.C.O.P., both the majority and the minority, was the completely unanimous view that, whatever else happens in Palestine, the British ought to be out of it. Whatever anyone in this House may think, there is no question that the United Nations as a whole differed from the Lord President of the Council, who gave his name to the other plan, in believing that the absence of the Foreign Secretary from future association with Palestine would not be an enormous hindrance to the finding of an adequate, peaceful solution to the problem presented in that country.

The second point I have in mind was commented upon by a number of hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Hastings (Mr. Cooper-Key), and is the reference which the Foreign Secretary made a few months ago, not in this House, to his idea that a British evacuation of Palestine would lower the standard of living of every worker in this country. My right hon. Friend offered no evidence at the time for that remarkable assertion and he has offered no evidence since. It is difficult to determine on what basis of economics such an assertion was ever

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO

371

61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

243

founded. It is true that our standard of living depends not inconsiderably upon cotton from Egypt, oil from Iraq, and citrus fruits from Palestine, but before the war we always depended successfully upon them without having a couple of hundred thousand men on either side of the Suez Canal. I have no doubt that we shall be able to do so in the future. It was strange not to find the Foreign Secretary explaining what a remarkable change had come about, resulting in the fact that now it was possible for us to evacuate Palestine without every worker in Great Britain being short of food, despite the fact that only four or five months ago, according to his conception of the situation, it was not then possible.

Perhaps the most remarkable of the points made by the Foreign Secretary, and one upon which I cannot refrain from commenting, was his assertion that we could not have done anything about this matter a couple of years ago, however much he might have been requested so to do by Members on all sides of the House. His reason was that that would have been riding roughshod over the people of Palestine and would have been imposing a solution, and that would have been repugnant to the tender, kindly heart of the Foreign Secretary. What has the Foreign Secretary been doing in Palestine for the last two years if he has not been imposing anything? Why has he wanted 100,000 soldiers there? It is clear that the presence of those large armed Forces has been because the Foreign Secretary has been imposing something. If he has not been imposing a policy, presumably he has had those soldiers there, as my hon. Friend the Member for East Coventry (Mr. Crossman) suggested yesterday, in order to impose the absence of a policy. I am sure the Foreign Secretary cannot be so naive as to imagine that he could take in the House for one moment with that sort of thing.

I want to underline one other point which has been made by a number of hon. Members, and principally by my hon. Friends the Members for Central Hackney (Mr. H. Hynd), and Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman), and that is that the whole of this Debate, including the speech of the Foreign Secretary, has seemed to be much more lugubrious than the situation demands. We have done too much talking about failure during these last two days. As a number of Members have

pointed out, there is a good deal of gain in Palestine. Notwithstanding all the difficulties and all the ill-feeling, there has been some record of advancement due to Jews, Arabs and British, each making a different sort of contribution. I do not look upon partition as a failure, and, above all, I do not look upon partition as a confession of the abandonment of all hope of ever getting Jews and Arabs to live and work together. On the other hand, it may be the only means by which Jews and Arabs can, through economic co-operation, eventually be brought to political co-operation. The New England States have a proverb which says:

"Good fences make good neighbours."

There is a great deal of sagacity in that. When we have people quarrelling and bickering over frontiers between their respective domains, it is a good idea to remove that cause of bickering, and then to see whether they cannot get on together on other grounds. I believe that we could remove irredentism in Palestine by the United Nations saying: "Look here, you chaps, both Jews and Arabs, it is no good your putting up representations and plans, because we have guaranteed the frontiers and they will not be changed." If that were done, the major potential cause of political quarrelling would be removed for all time, and Jews and Arabs would find very quickly that they needed to enter into some special technical forms of economic co-operation with each other.

Many Members have pointed out that this is a small country, which is true. Other small countries are, of course, to a larger extent capable of a limited degree of self-sufficiency, and are to a much greater extent capable of maintaining economic coherence than Palestine. Not only are there some general economic problems in Palestine, but the question immediately arises of the redeployment of labour as between town and countryside. There is also the problem of a tremendous deficit on the external exchange account, which will come about as a result of the removal of the British troops who have been spending British currency in the country. The deficit perhaps amounts to £30 or £40 per head of the population per annum, which is roughly the same as in this country.

Not only will there be the problem, which will arise when immigration starts,

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO** 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

244

1413

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

[Mr. Mikardo.]

as it will sooner or later, of the extra capital cost of absorbing temporarily or permanently unproductive people, but, as has been said, this is also a country where there is a tremendous inter-dependence in communications, not only in the case of railways and roads, but in the case of the electricity grid, which, as the frontiers are at present drawn, pops in and out of Jewish and Arab Palestine. Most important of all, in a country like Palestine, where the standard of life depends on the careful husbandry of the water supply, the water pipeline also pops in and out of Jewish and Arab Palestine. Before anyone can get round to irredentism, and long before people will get themselves in any mass degree excited about the amount of violence going on, there will have to be between the two countries shortly after 15th May a joint railway and roads board, a joint electricity board and, above all, a joint water board.

In the long run, the relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine will not be settled by Jewish orators and Arab orators, by terrorists or by agitators on either side, but by the Jew who earns his living growing oranges on one side of the frontier and the Arab who earns his living by growing oranges on the other side both having to use the same lorry to send their oranges to market. They will not quarrel on that, and they will stop other people from quarrelling. It is remarkable that for many years past, right through the Jewish terrorism and the Arab terrorism, right through the political negotiations, in which there have been hard feelings between Jews and Arabs, there has been a joint Citrus Marketing Board where a number of Jews and a number of Arabs have quietly met and decided what citrus gets sold and at what price.

This coming together of Jews and Arabs, this creating of good neighbours over a good fence, depends very much upon a real act of statesmanship by the British Government in the method of its own withdrawal. This country has a long record of redeeming sometimes not so glorious relations with other countries by a final act of brilliant statesmanship. Perhaps the best example, though by no means the only example, of that was the behaviour of this country towards South Africa at the end of the South African war. At this distance of time we can all say that Great Britain did not behave

74 A 42

perfectly in the last decade of the last century towards South Africa, but when the bitterness of the fight had died out, the behaviour of this country towards South Africa was probably one of the most brilliant and glorious examples of treatment by a victor of the vanquished in the history of the world. If we show the same spirit towards Palestine as we showed then, if we really act in the tone of the Colonial Secretary's voice yesterday, rather than the voice of the Foreign Secretary to-day, if we accept ungrudgingly the United Nations report and decision, we shall go a long way towards this end.

I wish to make a particular point about a question yesterday, to which there was no reply from the Foreign Secretary today, that I was able to put through the courtesy of the right hon. Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley). When will the United Nations Five-Power Commission be allowed to go to Palestine? We heard yesterday from the Colonial Secretary, and today from the Foreign Secretary, that it will be only just before May 15th. Every one is agreed that you cannot have two kings in a country at the same time, and it would be quite farcical for that Commission to go there with anything like governing power whilst this country still held the Mandate.

Of course it would be equally farcical if we walked out on 15th May, and the new king had to walk in on 16th May. The right hon. Member for West Bristol made a number of suggestions which might be acceptable to the Government, to the effect that some of the Commission, or some technical officers could travel on different dates. I hope those suggestions will commend themselves to the Colonial Secretary and that in adopting them, and adopting them in that ungrudging way in which he spoke yesterday, with, I am sure, complete sincerity, he will give a lead towards the creation of that new spirit in this tortured country which I believe it is possible to generate. It may be that we shall have once again, as we have had from that country in the past, a new guiding light in the social progress of mankind.

3.26 p.m.

Mr. Beverley Baxter (Wood Green): I will detain the House only a few minutes, as I know other hon. Members wish to speak, but there are a few things

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

which I think should be put on record in this Great House. When we look on the tragedy of the Jewish race, with its many sufferings, it is a very unhappy thing that we should ever be in the position of having even to appear to be adding to their sorrows. Nevertheless, I think it is time the Jews thought a little, not only of the exactions and harassments since the war, but during the war, and that this historic fact remains that because of the Balfour Declaration and because of our great control of Palestine, some 600,000 Jews have been able to live through the years of this dreadful tyranny in happiness and comparative prosperity.

That is an achievement which I think Jewish people everywhere, even the most ardent Zionists, should recognise, that out of the population of Jews in the world Britain was responsible for the happiness and security of 600,000 of those people. Especially, the "bad hat" crowd in New York, who did so much to finance the Zionist Movement in Europe against us, should take cognisance of this fact, and realise their responsibility for many things which have occurred. I would say to them, if my voice could possibly carry across the Atlantic, that they failed to realise what we were doing for them, and that they only increased the suffering of their own people by those methods.

When we were in the unhappy position of having to bring back that convoy of ships from Palestine I thought it a dreadful thing to put those people back into Germany, because, although there are supposed to be no Nazis left, that dark country, with its persecution of the Jews, has not altered fundamentally, and it must have been a cause for despair to those people, who had hoped to reach Palestine, to be turned back. I wish the Government had sent those ships on to New York. I say that with an absolute sense of responsibility. Why not? There is room for them in America, lots of room, and it was from America that this violence was financed. I wish His Majesty's Government, instead of turning those people into Germany, had sent them to America. I believe the Americans, with their combined sense of justice and humour, would probably not have resented it. It would have put the proposition at the door where it belongs.

I think that yesterday in this House, even if it were not a very noisy demonstration from this side, we were delighted and encouraged by the report of the President of the Board of Trade on concluding, in principle at any rate, a trade agreement with Russia. That is the one bright spot that has occurred for a long time in this awful problem of that Eastern combination of nations which is dominated by Communism. I believe that, as the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Mikardo) has just said—

Mr. Solley (Thurrock): I believe that the hon. Member was not present at that time and what he now says is a complete travesty of the truth. The Tory Benches displayed such dismay at the news as was almost completely unique in the history of this Parliament.

Mr. Baxter: I said that there was no particular cheering, because in all things Russian we must be careful that it is not just some trick, but I was certainly here and there was not a single demonstration of disapproval, and the hon. Gentleman opposite is being thoroughly irresponsible. I am sure that I speak for my party on this matter when I say that we were all encouraged by what happened in Russia.

My only point is this. In Palestine, there is only one cure for violence, and that is normality of life. It is not going to be easy for the Stern Gang to put away their guns and become men of peace. The old Biblical saying that those who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind is still true, and there is only one hope for Palestine. If this organisation, heavily financed from New York, will be wise and will be restrained and will give U.N.O. a chance, it is possible, as the hon. Member opposite has said, that the Jewish people may be able to return to their agricultural pursuits and the growing and selling of oranges, elemental as that sounds. My last word to them is this. Let the Jewish race, wherever it spreads itself across the world, acknowledge its great debt to this country here. Let them try to imagine for a moment what are the feelings of parents in this country whose boys were the soldiers who ran through Europe, dying in tens of thousands, to defeat and crush the enemy of Israel—

Mr. Austin (Stretford): And of democracy.

245

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

246
1417

Palestine

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Palestine

1418

Mr. Baxter: If the hon. Member likes, certainly, the enemy of the Jews. They crushed the enemy of the Jews, and these soldiers, when peace came and they would normally have gone back to their homes, went to Palestine and were shot in the dark. Let them think of the feelings of the parents who have sons who had been through all the battles of Europe only to be killed in Palestine. One wonders, perhaps, that there is not more bitterness in this country than there is, and, for that reason, I send out this plea to America, where they have such a large organisation and large sums of money to spend on making trouble in Palestine—not the American people, but this organisation to which I have referred, and I can tell the House that I know something about it. There is still time for the Jewish race to show that it has a sense of responsibility, and to show that they will put away their guns and once again take up the ploughshares or whatever it is that they use for growing oranges.

3.34 p.m.

Mr. Orbach (Willesden, East): The hon. Gentleman has just made an appeal to the Jewish people, as other hon. Members have done. I think that too many hon. Members have made this appeal. I have purposely refrained from intervening in a Debate on the Palestine issue until now, because, as an hon. Member of this House who is of the Jewish faith, and representing a constituency which has a considerable number of British citizens of the Jewish faith, I thought, perhaps it would be better to leave Debates of this description to more objective individuals.

But so many references have been made to Jewish Members of this House by those supporting the Arab case that I felt I had to get up on this occasion. Appeals have been made to us as if every Jewish Member of this House was of one mind, and as if we were all participants in some great plot or conspiracy, either to damage this country or to assist another country, and as if we had our own leader in this House and our own Whips.

It ought to go on record that the Members who have been responsible for making such insinuations know perfectly well that they have been talking the most arrant nonsense, the same type of nonsense as I received in a letter from a

constituent of mine who, writing quite seriously, said:

"There are 150 Jewish Members of the House of Commons and, apart from one or two like yourself, all the rest are relatives of the 150."

Those of us who have made a study of this problem know perfectly well that there are 28 Members of this House who are of the Jewish faith, and who are prepared to declare that they are members of the Jewish faith. Almost all of them are at variance with each other on the different subjects which we discuss here.

Having said that I wish to make one or two observations on the matter which we are discussing. I thought that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made a statesmanlike speech this afternoon, and that he was entitled to give an explanation of that for which he had been responsible during the past two and a half years. In so far as he said that, had matters been left to himself, there might have been a juster solution earlier than that being arrived at now, we are entitled to be generous, and to say that, perhaps, my right hon. Friend was perfectly correct. If there had been no interference from different quarters, perhaps he would have been able to reach agreement between Arab and Jew, and perhaps a solution of this problem might have been found in January, 1946, or even earlier. However, I was very happy to hear from his lips, and from those of my right hon. Friend the Colonial Secretary, that we are ungrudgingly accepting the United Nations' decision.

I felt that, however, on the part of certain back benchers on both sides of the House, there was a little bad feeling and ill-grace. It seemed to me that the type of feeling which they expressed was as contemptible, if I may say so, as challenging, if one is part of the home side, the judgment of a referee when the home side have been responsible for his appointment. What, in fact, is this judgment which we have been asked to consider? I do not want to go back either to Moses, as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said last night, to the Balfour Declaration, to the McMahon letters, or to the White Paper of 1939. The judgment of the United Nations Assembly was that two new sovereign states were to be set up—and that is all we ought to consider—instead of the one police state which exists today.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference:

FO 371/61797

247

I think we all accept the fact that the trusteeship which we have held in Palestine has only been exercised in the past few years at any rate, by the use of force. If we are to have two democratic states in place of the one police state which exists today, everybody in this House ought to be prepared to welcome that decision. I thought that much too much attention had been paid to the problems of partition from a geographical point of view, and not enough to the questions considered by the ad hoc Committee which considered this problem in relation to the constitution of these two particular States.

I welcome the fact that representation is to be given to all persons above the age of 18. It seems to me to be carrying democracy a stage further even than in this great country. In so far as there is to be transit permissible for persons from one of the states to the other without let or hindrance, we have something we ought to be thankful that the United Nations has agreed to. In so far also as every individual in the present state could opt as to what particular state he would belong, we ought to thank the United Nations for reaching that useful conclusion.

Having said that, we have to say one or two words—and I would follow the hon. Member for Reading (Mr. Mikardo)—about the economic position of Palestine and about the economic position of this country. One hon. Member opposite yesterday who discussed world Jewish sovereignty, and everything else contained in the Protocols of Zion, without mentioning it, that in Palestine there is a great deal of gold. Thousands of millions of pounds were mentioned. I do not think that anybody in this House is seriously concerned about that. Getting gold from Palestine would be almost like getting gold from Fort Knox for redistribution all over the world. But he did say there was potash in Palestine, one of the products of the Dead Sea, as a result of the engineering and chemical operations for which we are all very grateful. Another hon. Member said that uranium might be found. I am not concerned about that, but I do want to say a word or two about the day-to-day economic problems.

What is the Colonial Minister going to do about the food situation in Palestine itself? The wheat position there has been

the worst for years. I understand contracts were signed by the present administration for the importation of wheat into that country. Are those contracts going to be fulfilled, in spite of the fact that two separate States are going to be established? Are the contracts going to be handed over to the two States? I can find, too, no explanation for the embargo placed on diamonds being imported into Palestine today. I do not understand that, and I am wondering whether the administration is suffering any way from peevishness. I think that we ought—and I follow the hon. Member for Wood Green (Mr. Baxter) in this—to start trade negotiations with the two groups who will represent the two Palestines after the Mandate has been ended. Those negotiations ought to be started at the earliest possible time. If we can establish effective economic units in both countries I think we can leave the political *rapprochement* between those two nations in the Near East.

The last speaker had something to say about Jewish gratitude to this country. Let me say this on behalf of all Jews of all types—orthodox, non-orthodox, Liberal, Zionist and anti-Zionist. We have the highest regard and admiration for the British nation. Those of us who are British owe no loyalty to anybody else, but the Jews as a whole throughout the world—and I have spent some time in the United States of America—have a high regard for our way of life. The Jews of Palestine surely showed that during the war, when our backs were to the wall, and when they came to the assistance of the British nation, as did no others in the Near East. I think that recent history will be quickly forgotten. If I may say so the British people by force of arms and in their administration made Zionist aspirations possible. Let us, therefore, now go down in history as a people who accepted a great trust; carried it forward through very great difficulties indeed and who relinquish it with grace and generosity.

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Austin (Stretford): Before I turn to the primary reason for my intervention in this Debate, I want to make a comment on an observation made by the Foreign Secretary, because I thought it had tremendous significance. That was in his answer to a question by my hon.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

249

Haganah arms which are preventing the Jews from keeping open the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road. The improved relations between Jews and British which were noticeable towards the end of last week are now relaxing into bitterness."

It has always been my contention that there exists the broadest possible grounds for amity and friendship between the British and the Jews in Palestine and I am sorry, if these accusations are correct, that there is developing again this tendency towards bitterness and hatred. There could be no more certain method employed of making terrorists of the Jews than that of withholding from them arms which they have with a view to defending themselves. I am not an authority on Palestine, but on the question of the Haganah it was stated only in the last year or so that the organisation of Haganah was formed by the British prior to the war with a view to defending itself and possibly, to defending British establishments against Arab terrorists. If Haganah was British-formed and British-trained, then it has played a very vital part in the Middle East in training units and in fighting for democracy.

In all justice and equity I would submit to the Colonial Secretary that Haganah be now legally authorised to carry arms in its own defence. I would remind my hon. Friend of the observation he made in the House a few days ago when he commended Haganah and the Jewish authorities for the restraint they had exercised in the face of terrorism by the Arabs. If he allows the Jews the responsibility to carry arms in their own defence—and for years now they have been striving to build up their home in Palestine—he will be rendering yeoman service to democracy in Palestine, to the safety of those living in Palestine and to its future well-being. But, if between now and 15th May when it is intended that we should withdraw, he allows the Jews to be defenceless and to be beaten down by Arab terrorists organised by this notorious, shameful reactionary, the Mufti, he is going to perpetrate another chapter of blood-letting in the Middle East. I know my right hon. Friend's character. I know his kindly disposition, his tolerance, his outlook and his attitude in general to these matters, and I do ask him to think over seriously all the issues which I put to him contained in this despatch. I do think it is his duty immediately to institute an inquiry into the

truth or otherwise of the dispatch I have had the opportunity of quoting to the House.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. William Whiteley): I beg to ask leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

~~Mr. Bell~~

Mr Wright has asked
if the statement
about compensation
for Br. officials do
not conflict with
what the S.S. said in
his speech in the Pal.
debate. Pl. look up

IMB

281

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

1	2	3	4	5	6
		1		2	

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Mr. Burrows

Minutes.

251

E 11921/46/21 INDEXED

I attach the ~~Hangar~~ Report of the Secretary of State's Speech on Palestine of December 12th. The revelant passage will be ~~found~~ in column 1399. The Secretary of State welcomed the tributes to the achievement "of the British Administration and police in Palestine." He went on to talk of the devoted public ~~civilians~~ who had spent ~~the~~ greater part of their lives in the Palestine service and who would now have their careers cut short. He said he was authorised to say that they would receive adequate compensation. This assurance is clearly meant to refer to British officials in Palestine and not to locally recruited Palestinian officials of the British administration. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State did refer to "the British Administration" at the beginning, and it might just possibly be argued that Palestinian officers came under this umbrella.

The passage in the E.P.C. minutes refers to locally recruited Palestinian officers. I gather that officials of the Colonial Office are much exercised by the prospect that these Palestinians who have continued to serve, at the risk of persecution by the extremists of their own race, will now be left in the lurch. They also fear that the people concerned will very soon drift away if it becomes known that they are not due to receive any compensation and that this will greatly weaken the administration in the months before the termination of the mandate.

I think it is clear that the Secretary of State had United Kingdom officials in mind in his speech, and that the treatment of local staff is one for the Colonial Secretary and the Chancellor in the first instance. The Foreign Office should, however, take into account the bad effect upon our reputation in the Middle East if Palestinians are treated shabbily.

J. G. S. Beith

(J. G. S. BEITH)

31st January, 1948.

Would not the compensation of these employees be one of the obligations of the Palestine Govt which the UN Commission must accept if we are to hand over the assets, if any?

B. A. Burrows

in B. 1/74

31.1
I

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

252

I have consulted the Colonial Office about the point raised by Mr. Burrows and their view is as follows. We do indeed hold that the compensation of Palestinian Government employees is a responsibility which falls to the United Nations Commission and ultimately the successor states. The relevant passages in the Partition Report will be found under Part I ~~10~~ Chapter 3(3) and Part I D Paragraph 13. Nevertheless this is all rather in the air, especially as these compensation benefits are to be a first charge on the Customs and other common revenue of the Joint Economic Board. Moreover Chapter 33~~3~~ says that "the state shall respect and fulfil" these financial obligations "provided they are recognised by the State". This caveat seems to make the chances of the Palestinian civil servants even more slender.

We look like winding up the affairs of Palestine with a deficit of about £4,000,000 pounds, mainly arising out of expenses on the Cyprus illegal immigrants' camps. In these circumstances it is not going to be easy for H.M.G. to take on extra liabilities of this kind in addition to such a deficit, which we shall probably have to meet ourselves.

J. G. S. Beith

J. G. S. Beith.
4th February, 1948.

The main point is that the S. of S. was thinking of British officials & the paper refers mainly to Palestinians. I doubt if there is much more we can do for the latter.

B. B. Burrows
5.2

M. H. Wright
5.2.

J. G. S. Beith

Flag D

Which is unlikely to be set up

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

2. PALESTINE

E.P.C. (48) 5th Mtg

[Signature]

253

The Committee considered memoranda by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (E.P.C.(48) 7 and 8) on the financial and economic questions resulting from the withdrawal from Palestine.

- 1) Sir E. Hall
- 2) Mr. Houghton
- 3) Sir John Gorton
- 4) E. R. Dyer

*no further
plans
at this
stage*

E.P.C.(48) 7 covered a report by the Overseas Negotiations Committee which had been prepared as a brief for Sir Alexander Cadogan's discussions with the United Nations Commission. E.P.C.(48) 8 recommended that Palestine and Transjordan should be excluded from the sterling area, as from a date early in February, that Palestine's sterling balances should be blocked from the same date, and that releases amounting to £13 millions should be made from these balances in 1948. It was explained that Palestine's deficit on current account in 1948 would amount to some £33 millions. We could not afford withdrawals on this scale from her sterling balances; moreover, it would greatly embarrass us in negotiations with other holders of sterling balances. It was not sufficient merely to block these balances; for some time to come there was no prospect that Palestine would be able to maintain an effective system of exchange control, and the only way to protect sterling was to exclude Palestine, at least for the present, from the sterling area. It was a necessary corollary to such action that Transjordan should also be excluded, since no other course was practicable until she could arrange to use a separate currency. It was proposed that these decisions should be made public in a statement on the lines suggested in the draft annexed to E.P.C.(48) 7.

In discussion, the following points were made:-

- (a) The proposals contained in E.P.C.(48) 8 for releases from Palestine's sterling balances in 1948 were open to criticism as being more favourable than the arrangements which had been agreed with countries such as India,

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

254

(c) The Transjordan Government would be accorded the most sympathetic treatment possible so long as it had to remain outside the sterling area.

Reference

FO 371/61797

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER pointed out that His Majesty's Government had refused to accept responsibility for the payment of pensions to Indian and Burmese officers of the civil services in India and Burma on the transfer of power; it would be inconsistent with that decision to assume such a responsibility towards Palestinian officers. There would be no objection to informing the High Commissioner for Palestine that the Government would be prepared to consider means for helping cases of United Kingdom nationals in special distress, but no public announcement on the subject should be made.

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

(1) Endorsed the recommendations made in E.P.C.(48) 7 and 8.

-4-

790

E

E 11922

1947

PALESTINE

16 DEC

255

Registry
Number

E 11922/46/31

FROM

P.O. Command.

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

16 Dec

Palestine Communique, (Discarded)

Transmit text of communique issued 10 Dec
in Palestine. Giving warning that communal
disorders must cease, and call upon leaders
of the two communities for their co-operation to
this end.

Reference E/ 2584 10 Dec

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

11921

RFB. 14/12

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action
completed.)

J. L. 16/12

(Index)

RFB. 14/12

Next Paper.

E 11946

29470 F.O.P.

1
2
3
4
5
6

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: FO 371/61797

256

E 11922 E

INWARD TELEGRAM

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

16 DEC

En Clair

FROM PALESTINE (Gen. Sir A. Cunningham)

D. 10th December, 1947.

R. 10th " " 18.50 hrs.

No. 2384

Addressed to S. of S.
Repeated Cairo, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Jeddah,
Aden, Amman.

Following official communique was issued in
Palestine today. Begins.

His Majesty's Government have made it clear that so
long as the Mandate for Palestine remains in force the
Mandatory Administration will discharge its duty of
maintaining law and order.

During the past nine days there have been attacks
upon Jews by Arabs, upon Arabs by Jews and upon the Security
Forces by both Arabs and Jews. These attacks have caused
serious losses of life and extensive damage to property.

The High Commissioner now gives warning that
communal disorders must cease before further suffering and
loss is occasioned to the population of Palestine, and
calls upon the leaders of the two communities for their
co-operation to this end. Should these disorders continue,
he will have no option but to direct the Security Forces
to adopt severe measures against all those, Jew and Arab
alike, who are breaking the law. Ends.

Copies sent to:-
Cabinet Offices

Ministry of Defence
Treasury

Admiralty

War Office

Ministry of Transport (M.O.T.)

Air Ministry

Foreign Office

M.I.5
Foreign Office

- Mr. S.E.V. Luke
- Brig. Cornwall-Jones
- Cdr. W. Evarshed
- Mr. A.J. Newling
- Mr. D.F.C. Blunt
- Mr. W. Russell-Edmonds
- Mr. P.N.N. Synnott
- Capt. Maunsell
- Capt. D.H. Hall-Thompson
- Mr. G.C.B. Dodds
- Brig. J.R.C. Hamilton
- Brig. L.L. Wansbrough-Jones
- Lt. Col. M.N. Charteris
- Mr. B.F. Picknett
- Mr. P.C. Rennie
- Air Commodore Brook
- Group Capt. V.H.B. Roth
- Mr. B.A.B. Burrows
- Mr. I.P. Gerran
- Mr. J.G.B. Beith
- Mr. J.C. Robertson
- P.S. to Sir Orme Sargeant
- P.S. to Foreign Secretary

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

781

E

111940

257

1947

16 DEC

Registry
Number

FROM

No.

Dated

Received
in Registry

E11946/46/31

60

Comm.

16 Dec.

Palestine Disorders

Palestine Cl 2376 of Dec 9.

Summary of Palestine debate in the House
of Commons, sends information with
regard to recent disorders in Palestine and
also news on same

Last Paper.

11922

(Minutes.)

H.B. 17/12

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

(Action
completed.)

(Index)

5011
46/10/17/12

27/48

Next Paper.

11947

29470 F.O.P.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference: **FO 371/61797**

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

258 *Encl.*
39 E

INWARD TELEGRAM

111946

16 DEC

Cypher (O.T.P.)

FROM PALESTINE (General Sir A. Cunningham)

TO S. OF S. COLONIES.

D. 9th December, 1947.

R. 9th " " 14.30 hrs.

MOST IMMEDIATE

No. 2376 Top Secret and Personal.

I have been considering whether in view of the debate on Palestine this week there was anything I could add to the information already sent to you on the situation which might be useful. I should perhaps say something about recent disorders.

2. There may be perhaps a tendency to consider that Arabs have had their flare up and that now all will be peace. I only wish I could support this view. I have already reported riots were spontaneous and against the wishes of the Arab (?leaders). But verbal efforts of leaders to stop them have taken form that now not the right time, this period for arming and organising, when this complete they will attack Jews. There is moreover a suspicion that at least one member of Arab Higher Committee is secretly encouraging the mob.

3. I hope that during the remainder of our time here we may safely steer our way through Scylla and Charibidis of Arab and Jewish passions. It will mean however on our part most meticulous impartiality in all our doings, and on the part of Arabs and Jews cessation of reprisals which are still going on and are always dangerously liable to flare up into general disorder. The Jews, in their present state of mixed hysteria and braggadocio, are of the two more liable to provoke trouble during the period immediately facing us. I am urging intensive joint action by the police and Army against these disorders during the next fortnight.

at/

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

RECEIVED IN C.B.
15 DEC 1947
SENT TO DEPT.

259

at the end of which time the security outlook will become clearer.

I am sure that the House must be well aware how at this (?time) a chance word may act as a match thrown into a powder keg.

4. Any tendency in the world now to under estimate the Arabs intentions has also its dangers for us in future after we have left Palestine. There will undoubtedly be Arab attacks on Jews and unless U.N.O. provides means to maintain law and order in Palestine there will be a state amounting to war which may well last a long time.

(75). We are the only people with complete knowledge of the facts and as such have responsibility of giving full warning as to what the situation is, so that adequate steps will now be taken to deal with it when we leave. If we do not, then undoubtedly blame for anything which may happen after we leave will be laid at our door.

6. You should know that brunt of the action in recent disorders has been borne by the police, and Army has been little engaged. The police have had and are having a gruelling time. If you could find it possible to mention the police apart from Army it would be of assistance to us.

Distributed to:-

1	2	3	4	5	6

Reference: FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

INWARD TELEGRAM

260
END

Distributed to:-

R. 243
Secretary of State
Sir T. Lloyd
Mr. Rees-Williams
Sir S. Caine
Sir C. Jeffries
Mr. Holding
Mr. Martin
Mr. Trafford Smith
Mr. Gutch
Mr. Mathieson
Mr. Higham
Mr. Galsworthy
Mr. Holmer
Mr. Dale
Cabinet Offices

Ministry of Defence
Treasury

Admiralty

War Office

Ministry of Transport

Air Ministry

Foreign Office

N.I.S.

Mr. S.B.V. Luke.
Brigadier Cornwall-Jones.
Commander Evershed.
Mr. A.N. Newling.
Mr. D.F.C. Hunt.
Mr. W. Russell-Edmonds.
Mr. P.H.W. Symonds.
Captain Mansell.
Capt. D.H. Hall-Thompson.
Mr. G.C.B. Dodds.
Brig. J.R.G. Hamilton.
Brig. L.L. Wansbrough-Jones.
Lt. Col. M.K. Charteris.
Mr. R.F. Picknett.
Mr. F.C. Rennie.
Air Commodore Brock.
Group Captain V.D.L. Roth.
Mr. D.A.B. Burrows.
Mr. P. Gordon.
Mr. G.G.S. Beith.
Mr. J.C. Robertson.

1
2
3
4
5
6

Reference:

FO 371/61797

COPYRIGHT OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON